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Sex Tourism in St. Thomas, United States Virgin Islands: An Exploratory Study

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Sex Tourism in St. Thomas, United States Virgin Islands: An Exploratory Study

by

Elizabeth Estes

A Dissertation Presented to the
Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences of Nova Southeastern University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of Degree of
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This dissertation was submitted by Elizabeth Estes under the direction of the chair of the dissertation committee listed below. It was submitted to the Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Conflict Analysis and Resolution at Nova Southeastern University.

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Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acknowledgements</th>
<th>v</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Appendices</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter One: Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Background</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question and Organization of Study</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of terms</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Two: Theory</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Needs Theory</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Needs Theory and Conflict</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Needs Theory and Sex Tourism</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Needs, Sex Tourism, and Conflict</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Tourism Literature</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Commonalities</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Three: Methodology</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triangulated Data</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Observations</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Interviews</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coding</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Validity</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risks</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflexivity</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Four: Data Analysis</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzed Internet Data</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet Themes and Theory</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet Culture of Tolerance</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzed Field Observations</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Observations Themes and Theory</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Observations Culture of Tolerance</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzed Formal Interviews</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Interviews Themes and Theory</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Interviews Culture of Tolerance</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Five: Discussion and Implications</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implication</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1:</td>
<td>Codes and Needs</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2:</td>
<td>Total Number of Craigslist Ads</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3:</td>
<td>Total Types of Craigslist Ads</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4:</td>
<td>Heterosexual vs. Homosexual Craigslist Ads</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Appendices

Appendix A: Craigslist Advertisements……………………………146
Appendix B: Behavior Observation List……………………………171
Appendix C: Interview Guide for Local Sex Providers………………172
Abstract

St. Thomas, United States Virgin Islands, is similar to other tourism dependent Caribbean nations where the tourism industry is dependent upon the ‘4 S’s’- sun, sand, sea, and sex.

This researcher posited that the phenomenon of sex tourism exists in St. Thomas as it does in other tourist destinations in the Caribbean like Jamaica, Belize, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic and Barbados (Bailey and Ricketts, 2003; de Albuquerque, 1998; Munshi, 2006; Ryan and Kinder, 1996). The lacuna of any U.S. Virgin Islands sex tourism literature prompted this researcher to conduct an exploratory case study in St. Thomas to learn whether or not sex tourism exists in the U.S. territory. Using a qualitative approach, this study finds that sex tourism does exist in St. Thomas. This information is pertinent to Conflict Analysis and Resolution because of sex tourism’s strong involvement with the spread of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS, human rights violations, gender based violence, human trafficking, and other social challenges. Examining sex tourism from three different sources, this researcher uses Human Needs theory and feminism to frame the research. The findings of this study are of interest to academia, government agencies, non-profit organizations, and tourism industries.
Chapter 1: Introduction

The research endeavor described in this dissertation was designed to examine whether or not sex tourism exists in St. Thomas, United States Virgin Islands (USVI), as it does in other tourism dependent Caribbean nations. Sex tourism as a topic of research within the Conflict Analysis and Resolution discipline is relevant for a myriad of reasons since conflicts related to sex tourism extend beyond the personal level to affecting societal, institutional and even global levels when basic needs are denied. This researcher supports sustainable change through community awareness. Since sex tourism affects all levels of society in St. Thomas, a cultural change is needed and may be effectively implemented through a grassroots movement. Once there is a desire to change at the community level, Conflict Resolution practitioners like mediators, facilitators, and negotiators will play an integral part in helping the St. Thomas community and greater Caribbean region curb its destructive sex tourism industry.

With the application of the Human Needs theory and aspects of feminist theory explained later in the theory and literature review chapter, this dissertation offers a perspective of sex tourism in a newly tapped location of study, St. Thomas. According to Burton (1998), humans will pursue the fulfillment of needs even in spite of themselves. The primary tenet of the Human Needs theory is that humans have essential ontological needs, which if left unfilled, will drive them to conflict. Unmet basic needs due to various social and structural blockades is a common reality throughout the Caribbean region revealing emblematic, often gendered, patterns of conflicts within and among the countries of this region. This research reveals problematic, gendered patterns of conduct in St. Thomas designed to satisfy basic human needs; conduct that that is indicative of sex tourism. As like other Caribbean nations that
experience sex tourism and social ills like high crime, poverty, drug use, gender based violence, and human trafficking, St. Thomas also experiences these social problems. This commonality lends suspicion that because St. Thomas is strikingly similar socially and culturally to other Caribbean island nations that experience sex tourism, so too does St. Thomas experience sex tourism.

Through a case study analysis using data from three separate sources (semi-formal personal interviews, field observations, and the internet), this qualitative research methodology paints a picture of sex tourism in St. Thomas and a culture of tolerance supporting it. Individually, each data source may not have conclusively demonstrate that sex tourism exists in St. Thomas, but collectively, through data triangulation and analysis, it is evident that sex tourism not only exists but presents differently for male sex providers than for female sex providers. Male sex providers seem to be freer to choose their involvements with tourists. They are not relying solely on income from sexual relations with tourists, they do not experience negative repercussions from the community, nor do the police harass them. Rather, male sex providers use their involvement with tourists to gain status and a sense of belonging in the world beyond St. Thomas. Female sex providers, on the other hand, do not gain social status through their sexual experiences with tourists, are sequestered to strip clubs, brothels or certain sections of town, and seem to rely solely on their sexual experiences for income to support themselves and their families.

Being a case study, three propositions guided this research:

1) That humans have certain ontological needs that, if unfulfilled or unmet, will drive them to conflict
2) That an abundance of unmet basic needs and a lack of the ability to satisfy them is common in the Caribbean region thus revealing commonalities among the countries of certain patterns that are symbolic of the problems attributed to the absence of satiated basic needs.

3) That research in other sex tourism locations has identified a gendered dynamic to sex tourism.

Furthermore, this dissertation offers recommendations on how to address sex tourism in St. Thomas. Finding non-exploitative, non-sexist income options that level gender and ethnic inequalities is one recommendation. This approach may mean reevaluating the tourism industry as a whole. Conducting more research using the information gleaned from this study to understand the magnitude of sex tourism in St. Thomas and how sex tourism is related to the social ills of the island is another recommendation. The results of this research help to fill a gap in Caribbean sex tourism literature by including St. Thomas as yet another Caribbean island experiencing sex tourism. This research also reveals how similar the sex tourism industry in St. Thomas is with other Caribbean islands lending credence to a regional approach for addressing sex tourism.

**Case Background**

The United States Virgin Islands had frequently changed hands before finally becoming a United States territory in 1917. Located 50 miles east of Puerto Rico, 18 miles west of Tortola, (British Virgin Islands), 45 miles north of St. Croix, and two and a half miles west of St. John, St. Thomas boasts the deepest natural harbor in the Caribbean; a feature that has played a major role in the island’s history trading, shipping, and commercial history. Originally inhabited by Ciboney, Arawak, and Carib peoples,
the island was later home to European explorers, Caribbean pirates, English, French, and Dutch colonizers, African slaves, and most recently, American citizens (Dookhan, 1994; United States Virgin Islands Demographics, n.d.). As of the year 2000, the demographics of St. Thomas were; 81 percent black or African American, 13 percent white, one percent Asian, and five percent classified as ‘other’ (U.S. Census, 2000).

The geography of St. Thomas is unique. Rising to an elevation of 1,550 feet above sea level on a mountainous ridge running the 7-mile length of the island, the 32 square mile island of St. Thomas sits at 18 degrees latitude and 69 degrees longitude (United States Virgin Islands Demographics, n.d.; VINow, n.d.). The south side of the island is dry and hot most of the year, while the north side is rainy, hot, and very tropical. The island is made of volcanic rock with very little presence of soil or dirt, justifying its nickname ‘Rock Island’. For this reason and in conjunction with its deep harbor, St. Thomas functioned primarily as the trading, trafficking, and pirating hub of the Eastern Caribbean during colonial times, while St. John and St. Croix (the other two major islands of the USVI territory) grew cotton, indigo and sugar (Dookhan, 1994).

Since it was permanently settled in 1672, gender inequalities, ethnic differences, and power struggles in St. Thomas were just as much a part of the island’s inhospitable environment as its mountainous and dense thorny landscape (Dookhan, 1994). Due to the caustic effects of slavery, piracy, and colonization, St. Thomas seemed to be in a constant free-for-all for power and control of island life. Despite attempts over time St. Thomas and its people were unable to be tamed by military occupation, permanent settlement, or political influence. Still experiencing cultural turmoil, riots and civic unrest when the United States formally marketed the island’s beaches for tourism, the effects have led to what Dookhan (1994) has identified as the following social and
economic ills: “traffic congestion, high cost of living, housing pressure, alien labor, concentrated ownership and souring land values, absentee ownership and control of the economy, ecological abuse, and social disorganization” (p. ix).

The sexual history of St. Thomas is surmised to be comparable to what Kempadoo (1999) writes about the sexual history of the Caribbean region in general. She asserts that because of social inequalities, female sex work has been a part of this landscape for centuries and stems from power and control issues of European colonizers during slave days. Slave owners used sex as a tool of control since female slaves, particularly young females, were highly valued for the three sources of income they could yield: physical labor, prostitution, and reproduction. During this era, the European male practice of domination through racialized and gendered sexual abuse took its hold. Through rape and sexual abuse, Henriques (as cited in Kempadoo, 1999) wrote, “In time, no European male in the Caribbean, who could afford it, was without his colored mistress, either a freedwoman or slave” (p.5).

Given the differences between the Caribbean man and the woman’s socially defined sexuality today with respect to status and identity, it is evident that the sexual history of the Caribbean man is quite different from the Caribbean woman’s sexual history. These differences have had a greater negative impact on females than males since tourism has been imposed onto the region. For Caribbean males, tourism availed the opportunity to play up the ‘hypersexual’ or ‘quintessential black male’ role despite not having economic power. Once tourism was introduced to the region thrusting small poor nations into the global market, capitalism…

has had a tangible impact on the structural opportunities and possibilities for Caribbean working peoples, allowing us to conclude
that due to this process, sex work has become more important for the livelihood of Caribbean working men and women and for the wealth of global business” (Kempadoo, 1999, p. 23).

Today, in many ways St. Thomas’s physical and cultural landscapes still facilitate these social quandaries. The hundreds of small cays and islets surrounding St. Thomas and the nearby islands of St. John and Water Island make it easy to facilitate “clandestine activities” like smuggling humans, drugs, and guns (Office of National Drug Control Policy, n.d.). Human trafficking in and through St. Thomas is known to be a chronic issue along with the trafficking of guns and drugs (Norris, 2013a; Mortenson, 2010; Blackburn, 2011). People living in St. Thomas are clearly aiding and abetting these processes. And yet, evidence is only just coming to light that human trafficking into and out of St. Thomas is related to sex trafficking. But because of a lack of data, the extent of it is not known (Norris, 2013a).

It is unclear just how much human trafficking occurs in the Virgin Islands. Accurate statistics are not available because the existing statutes on human trafficking are rarely used, and perpetrators and sometimes victims themselves are prosecuted under laws prohibiting assault and prostitution. (Norris, 2013a)

For more constructive reasons related to its location and physical features, the United States gained an interest in the Virgin Islands for military positioning purposes during the construction of the Panama Canal in the late 1890’s. The United States purchased the three major islands making up the Virgin Islands in 1917 for $U.S. 25 million (VINow, n.d.). Run as an autocracy under naval rule when it was first purchased, the territory residents grew increasingly discontent with the colonial style rule. This
dissent gave rise to the Organic Act of 1936, which favored a more democratic government. However, because the President of the United States elected the representing governors for the territory under this act, the residents still did not feel they had true representation (AlexanderFarrelly.com). As a result, in 1954, the Revised Organic Act went into effect and, still to the time of this writing, acts as the territory’s ruling doctrine (Mattei, 2012; World Factbook, n.d.).

Though the Revised Organic Act still maintains that USVI citizens are United States citizens but without the right to vote for U.S. presidents, it was revised to provide the territory with more political autonomy while specifying its fiscal responsibilities, particularly those in relation to the United States (Dookhan, 1994). This act outlines the duties and responsibilities of 1) the legislative body, which consists of 15 salaried senators who determine their own pay rates and report directly to the governor and 2) the elected delegate representative, who serves the USVI on both the national and local Congressional levels (World Factbook, n.d. United States Virgin Islands Demographics, n.d.).

Yet despite the Revised Organic Act and the munificence from the United States, the territory’s autonomy is a façade. The Virgin Islands is still ultimately controlled by the United States Congress through the legal discretions of the President of the United States due to its unincorporated territory status (Dookhan, 1994; The Free Dictionary, n.d.). And because it has still failed to secure a valid territory constitution, federal laws have jurisdiction over local laws in the USVI. Furthermore, a federally appointed Comptroller oversees the disbursement and collection of local government monies leaving very little difference between the Virgin Islands as a U.S. colony and the Virgin Islands as a U.S. territory.
In the early 1930’s, under direction of the naval and civil administration, the first tourism infrastructures broke ground (Dookhan, 1994). Since this time immigration has increased resulting in an increased demand on land, water, and other resources. With the advent of tourism and beach resorts, and more white state-sider residents came restrictions to beaches; restrictions that specifically targeted local West Indian residents. During this time, beach rights were originally part of any ocean front property, property typically owned by white state-siders (Dookhan, 1994). Today, all beaches in the USVI are public when accessed by water and land access to beaches is limited to resort beaches, thus affording the opportunity for locals and tourists to intermingle on any resort beach (VI Now, n.d).

The matter of beach access reflects racial and ethnic tensions that have existed on St. Thomas since it was inhabited and have been exacerbated since the development of tourism (de Albuquerque and McElroy, 1982; Harrigan and Varlack, 1977). These tensions have not been limited to just white state-siders and local West Indians, but also exist among other West Indian/island populations living on St. Thomas. When Cuba prohibited Americans from traveling to Cuba in 1961, the USVI’s tourism revenues significantly increased (Dookhan, 1994). However, migrants, particularly those brought in to work in tourism and tourism-related construction industries, have and continue to be disadvantaged politically, socially, and economically, because they are not from St. Thomas (Harrigan and Varlack, 1977). They are often subjected to unfair earning rates, substandard living conditions, and a lack of employment advancement (de Albuquerque and McElroy, 1982; Dookhan, 1994).

On small islands there is very little distinction between residential areas of the island and ‘the tourist zone’ creating what he calls “resentment of the encroachment of
tourist activities on [the locals’] daily lives” (Bryan, 2001, p.11). Additionally, there are drastic contrasts in the quality of life and social etiquettes between tourists and locals favoring tourists adding to already existent ethnic and cultural tensions. A residual effect of these inequalities is an attitude of resentment often in the form of passive/aggressive behaviors.

As with other tourism dependent Caribbean destinations, ethnic and racial biases are just some of the problems associated with St. Thomas tourism since it became the pillar of the USVI economy (Harrigan and Varlack, 1977; McElroy and de Albuquerque, 1988). Like other island nations in the Caribbean, the development of tourism on the island of St. Thomas has taxed already limited island resources like land space, water, food, raw materials, and even the landfill (Bailey and Ricketts, 2003; de Albuquerque and McElroy, 1982; Grandoit, 2005; Norris, 2013b; Pope, 2005). Many of the current social and economic problems of the Caribbean region in general, and St. Thomas specifically, can be traced back to the mid 1900’s when tourism really developed. During this time, lending institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank pushed for the Caribbean region to be more involved in world commerce by reducing the value of each island’s currency, reducing the public sector, and promoting the development of tourism (Boxill and Quarless, 2005). This push impacted the USVI as well since it is the Caribbean. As a result, Caribbean economic structural adjustment policies, which included St. Thomas, drove many (mostly non-white young people 25 years and younger) below poverty lines, forced the closure of public schools and health care facilities, stripped agricultural jobs away from rural areas, and caused high inflation rates (Bailey and Ricketts, 2003; Boxill and Quarless, 2005; Kempadoo, 1999; Massiah, 1982; Thacker, Acevedo, and Perrelli, 2012). By the year 2000, 27 percent of the USVI
population lived below the poverty line compared with only 11.3 percent of the American population. Forty percent of single females in the territory (including heads-of-households living with children under 18 years old) were living in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). More to the point, despite it being a United States territory, the U.S. Virgin Islands is more closely aligned economically, culturally, and socially with other nations of the Caribbean than the United States, a point that may add to its attractiveness for sex tourists. Case in point, the average weekly income for St. Thomas is 26 percent lower on average than the average weekly income in the United States despite the cost of living being 33 percent higher than the United States (United States Department of Labor, 2009, VINow, n.d.). Comparing genders only, female households earned approximately $2000 less than male households on average in 1999 in the territory (U.S. Census, 2000). These factors help to explain why only 25 percent of USVI households earned $50,000 or more in 1999. The median family income for black families in 1999 was $29,710, $32,031 for ‘other races’, and $50,739 for white families (U.S. Census, 2000).

Considering these conditions, St. Thomas’ tourism industry has been controversial for generations.

While air and sea guests (mostly white, Western, middle to upper class tourists) do bring some income to the region by creating employment opportunities, most of the income generated never reaches the island inhabitants, a common phenomenon when developed countries exploit lesser or undeveloped areas of the world (Munshi, 2006). Furthermore, the employment opportunities created perpetuate gender and ethnic inequalities (Kempadoo, 2001; Munshi, 2005). Most of the businesses and commerce since colonial times have been owned and regulated by those who are European or of European descent and powered by the labor of West Indians (Harrigan and Varlack,
Based on observations, this researcher agrees with Harrigan and Varlack (1977) that most tourism businesses today in St. Thomas are owned by white state-siders. She is also aware that the three major resorts on St. Thomas employ mostly West Indian/Latina females for housekeeping and laundry and West Indian/Latino males for engineering and maintenance departments, while the majority of managers are non-local white males. Worldwide, this employee occupation pattern is repeated (Pinar, McCuddy, Birkan, and Kozak, 2009).

Also to consider are the living wage standard and the actual minimum wage standard in St. Thomas, which are drastically different. Kotval, Kotval, Machemer, and Mullin (2012) conducted an assessment on earned income in the Virgin Islands. The Federal Minimum Wage is the minimum wage for the territory. Yet the cost of living on St. Thomas far exceeds the realities of minimum wage earnings (Kotval et al., 2012). At the time of this study, the Federal Minimum Wage was $7.25 an hour while the livable wage for a single person with employer-sponsored health insurance was $10 an hour (Kotval et al., 2012). This difference equates to a drastic contrast in quality of living, particularly when contrasted against vacationing tourists traveling with disposable income. The contrast is even greater when considering gender.

Bailey and Ricketts (2003) speak to the overall Caribbean region’s gender and employment dynamics stating that female unemployment is higher than male unemployment, and that the labor options for females “consist of sex-stereotyped occupations with women dominating those occupations which are lowest paying and least protected” (p.51). Meanwhile, although Caribbean males working in higher paying positions may have greater job security relative to Caribbean females their earning is still less compared to white males working in the same positions (Boxill and Quarless, 2005;
Munshi, 2006; Lowen, 2012). These demographics are present in St. Thomas too and are supported by the 2000 U.S. Census data referenced earlier in this section. Boxill and Quarless (2005) assert that these inequalities mean “Caribbean countries, therefore, still experience gender vulnerabilities in areas of economic participation and economic empowerment with women in the region being at greater disadvantage and risk than men” (p. 50).

The Internet is another feature of the sex tourism industry found to be a contributing factor to the sexual exploitation and commercialization of residents of tourist destinations. Where there is sex tourism there is high Internet traffic advertising sex tourism. Two older and more prominent Internet sites that have come under the spotlight for their role in sex tourism and the perpetuation of antisocial behaviors are Google and Craigslist. Protected initially by a lack of legislation on Internet activities, then by the Communications Decency Act, these two sites and sites structured like them are protected by federal law despite their culpability in sex tourism, prostitution, and human trafficking. More on how these sites relate to sex tourism, a culture of tolerance, and St. Thomas will be discussed in Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

**Research Question and Organization of the Study**

In sum, finding that sex tourism does exist in St. Thomas, this dissertation offers a theoretical explanation as to why sex tourism exists in Chapter Two. Using the Human Needs theory, sex tourism, its gendered nature, and the related social problems are framed as means to an end. This approach to satisfying needs has been shaped by a culture of tolerance for not just sex tourism, but also for abuses of power, sexism, corruption, and racism. Sex tourism involves not only an unhealthy association among meeting needs, gender biases and racial stereotypes, but also a re-creation of identity
influenced by these unhealthy perspectives (Beech, 2011). Moreover, the links relating sex tourism, sex trafficking and prostitution are explained in Chapter two. Recognizing how these facets are defined and how they affect each other is crucial to understanding why sex tourism is so detrimental.

The second half of Chapter 2 reviews literature related to sex tourism from around the world and how this literature relates to sex tourism in St. Thomas. Specifically, these articles reveal how systemic gender inequalities, health issues, and human rights violations are perpetuated because of sex tourism. Chapter 3 spells out the methodology this researcher used to collect data from the three different sources to support the position that sex tourism does exist in St. Thomas. Using a qualitative case study approach, this chapter explains how the data were triangulated and coded. Examining sex tourism in St. Thomas through a case study analysis allows for a holistic perspective of this multifaceted phenomenon (Creswell, 2003). Though case studies are typically not generalizable, given the similarity of other Caribbean sex tourism data available, the information specific to St. Thomas will complete the overall picture of sex tourism in the Caribbean region. As Stake (1995) indicates, seldom do researchers generalize to other cases, but sometimes it is inevitable.

Chapter 4 is a discussion of the analyzed data and includes recommendations for future research. The goal for this research is to fill a gap in the Caribbean sex tourism literature by providing significant qualitative evidence on the existence of sex tourism in St. Thomas. This evidence can be applied to efforts focused on addressing the causes of sex tourism, like leveling local gender inequalities and improving the overall health and safety of the community. Sweden approached sex tourism eradication efforts in much the same way. This dissertation can provide a foundation for future social research
addressing gender and ethnic issues and/or tourism related issues. The implications of this research are discussed in Chapter 5 of this report. Because there is a push for change, this case study offers conflict resolution practitioners information that will help guide the application of their skills. Finally, Chapter 6 concludes this dissertation. The findings of this research will be helpful for tourism agencies, health and social service entities, and governments of St. Thomas and the Virgin Islands.

**Definition of Terms**

For clarity and ease of understanding, this researcher defines below several key terms important to this research.

**Sex Tourism.** This study defines sex tourism as travel taken by an adult tourist (sex tourist) to a foreign, unfamiliar, or non-home location (in this case, St. Thomas), and includes a sexual relation with a person(s) (sex provider) living in that foreign, unfamiliar, or non-home location. The word foreign does not necessarily mean international, but rather a location outside of the traveler’s home area. The most prevalent form of sex tourism is exploitative and includes female sex providers and male sex tourists. Where the sex tourism industry creates the demand, human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation supplies the commodified bodies. In this way, sex tourism is directly linked with sex trafficking and the prostitution of people, mostly females.

**Sex Trafficking.** Sex trafficking is considered today’s modern day slavery and is a form of human trafficking (United States Department of Justice, n.d.). Human trafficking is the third largest criminal industry after the drug trade and arms dealing, and it is also one of the fastest growing international crimes. Sex trafficking is a facet of sex tourism because it provides the bodies for the sex tourism industry. Sex trafficking is a
violation of United States federal law and the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, 
Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons.

**Sex Tourist.** Sex tourist refers to an adult 18 years of age and older of any 
gender and nationality who has sexual relations with a person/people who lives in the 
foreign location where the sex tourist travels. For the purpose of this study, a sex tourist 
cannot reside in the USVI.

**Sex provider.** Sex providers can be of any gender and age. The focus for this 
study will be adults (18 years old and older) who reside in St. Thomas and who provide 
sexual services to sex tourists. Sex providers can service tourists exclusively or can 
service both tourists and locals.

**Local.** A “local” will be defined as a person who resides in St. Thomas. “Local” 
is contingent upon the context of the conversation. It can mean resident versus tourist, 
black versus white, West Indian versus state-sider, or Virgin Islander versus down 
islander. In this dissertation, most of the references to local are relative to tourists.

**Liminal.** Liminal refers to behavior and people and implies a concept of 
temporary or marginal  (Ryan and Kinder, 1996). Turner (as cited in Graburn, 1983) 
describes liminal behaviors of tourists as an apartness “most appropriate for ….socially 
comprehensive phenomena, whereas the analogous phenomena in secular rituals and 
leisure activities may be called liminoid” ( p.14) Liminal is a term commonly used by 
social scientists studying sex tourism because it describes the uncharacteristic nature of 
the tourists. Weichselbaumer (2011) refers to liminal behavior as carnivalesque, where a 
tourist’s holiday world is in a state of “temporal suspension of order where traditional 
hierarchies are set aside, social divisions are laughingly transgressed, and lewd, licentious 
behavior rules” (p. 1221). Ryan and Kinder (1996) describe liminal behavior as
belonging to marginal people (tourists who are not assimilated to the local culture), and behaviors that are imprecise, ambiguous, and unprincipled because of their out-of-context and time-sensitive characteristics. Munshi (2006) discusses liminal behavior as the antithesis of daily, work related, routine structured behavior. Liminal behaviors such as those related to sex tourism play into the visited destination’s culture of tolerance, where local authorities pay little attention to behaviors that will cease when the tourists leave.
Chapter Two: Theory and Literature Review

Theory
Applying a theoretical lens to case study research offers a framework for data application. Viewing data from a particular perspective offers connections to findings and behaviors that might not otherwise be seen. For example, observing two very young black women, speaking with St. Thomian accents, wearing halter top dresses, having dinner with an elderly white man, speaking with a British accent, dressed in a casual suit, at an outdoor restaurant, along the harbor where rows of mega-yachts are docked may not appear to be anything significant to a layperson, but to a researcher studying sex tourism through a Human Needs theoretical lens this scene may be evidence of sex tourism. Though this research is exploratory for St. Thomas, the topic is not unique. Sex tourism has typically been viewed through the Human Needs theoretical lens, particularly studies on Caribbean sex tourism (de Albuquerque, 1998; Kempadoo, 2001; Herold, Garcia and DeMoya, 2001; Smith and Ashiabi, 2007). Therefore, this research will also apply Human Needs theory as a way to explain the existence of sex tourism in St. Thomas.

Human Needs. Human Needs theory describes people’s motives based on satisfying elements of human life that are so essential that without them one struggles to survive (Marker, 2003; Maslow, 1943; Fisher, 1990). These elements are both physical and emotional. According to Maslow (1943), there are five basic human needs that are more universal than superficial desires or behaviors. These needs are physiological, safety, love, esteem and the need for self-actualization. Physiological needs allow the body to physically function normally when they are met, like homeostasis. Safety needs motivate people to find positions and situations where they feel free of threats to life and secure in their environment. Love needs are those that drive people to make relationships with others, of both the romantic or platonic types. Esteem needs are met when people
have high evaluations of their selves, in addition to having self-respect, self-esteem, and
the esteem of others based on interactions with others. Finally, the need for self-
actualization refers to the motivation to achieve self-fulfillment or the maximum potential
in life.

Though Maslow (1943) is credited with being one of the first to provide a
description of human needs through his hierarchy of needs model, there are many other
social scientists who have since elaborated and expanded this concept. Burton (1998)
describes human needs in relation to conflict and conflict resolution, concluding that
when needs are met, conflicts are resolved or avoided all together. When conflicts occur,
it is because basic needs are not met or satisfied. He views societies as responsible for
accommodating basic needs, rather than people forgoing their own needs to
accommodate society. In other words, how people meet their needs depends on the
person’s social context since humans are social beings. Burton (1998) argues that when
basic needs are not met for the sake of accommodating society, antisocial behaviors
occur. “It is the struggle to satisfy non-material human needs that is the prime source of
conflict” (Burton, 1998, p.2).

As mentioned to above, Burton (1998) addresses a fundamental issue not
recognized in Maslow’s (1943) approach making Burton’s approach more universal.
Burton (1998) thickens the cultural element of needs theory by acknowledging that if a
need is culturally bound then so too must be its satisfier (Rubenstein, 2001). This point
relates specifically to non-physical human needs such as identity and security needs.
Burton (1998) claims humans will strive for and defend these needs even before physical
needs are met, as is evident with gang wars and civil wars (Rubenstein, 2001). Again,
Burton’s position is that people will pursue the fulfillment of needs even in spite of themselves.

Fisher (1990) discusses the individual/group dynamic within the Human Needs theory. To appreciate this approach, Fisher (1990) admits that one must adopt the assumption that people have “undeniable needs and rights for dignity, respect, security, and a ‘place in the sun’ in both physical and psychological terms- that is identity, participation, and adequate control over their own destiny” (p. 3). He contends that the need for identity, both individual and group, is created through social interaction and is paramount to any other basic need including physical needs. Through the social interaction and formation of individual/group identity, self-esteem is created at the personal level, and discrimination of others and in-group favoritism is generated at the group level. The way Fisher (1990) relates the discrimination of others as tied to basic needs is of relevance to this research and connects Burton’s perspective that unmet needs lead to conflict.

Power is also a human need according to Glasser’s (1998) Choice theory. Glasser’s (1998) Choice theory explains human motivation as being internally driven by human needs. Basic needs like love, belongingness, and self-actualization are common between Maslow (1943) and Glasser (1998). Like Burton (1998), Glasser (1998) argues that these needs are defined and satisfied socially or culturally. One of these needs is identity or being recognized and respected that also fulfills a need for power (Folger, Poole and Stutman, 2009 p. 92; Glasser, 1998). What Glasser (1998), and Folger and associates (2009) describe as a need for power, Fisher (1990) references as control over one’s destiny, while Maslow (1943) refers to it as a need for self-actualization. When this need is described as “a sense of competence and personal power, to act with a degree
of freedom and autonomy”, this researcher considers Glasser’s (1998) concept of power as a need for empowerment to freely choose (p. 2). When power needs are denied or not met, conflicts against the inhibitors can occur, again tying in Burton’s theory on needs and conflict.

**Human Needs Theory and Conflict.** Needs theorists agree that when a need is not satisfied, a person experiences frustration and discomfort, which can present as aggression and conflict (Burton, 1998; Glasser, 1998; Marker, 2003; Maslow, 1943). These theorists also agree that basic needs must be met in order for higher individual and social functioning. Maslow (1943) claims a good society makes its members feel safe, and in turn safe members make a good society lending advice for avoiding individual and society wide conflicts. Accordingly, Burton (2001) indicates that governments have an obligation to help individuals meet their basic needs to deter damaging social behaviors like drug abuse, gang violence and domestic violence. Without the aid of governments to assist in this regard, such antisocial behaviors will occur. In line with Burton (2001), Rubenstein (2001) promotes the correlation between unmet basic needs at the individual level and social conflict. Violence and other anti-social behaviors occur when situations and environments do not allow individuals or groups to achieve their basic needs. KOK (2007) argues that the Human Needs theory implies that “aggressions and conflicts are the direct result of some institutions and social norms being incompatible with inherent human needs” (p.1). To resolve conflicts, Marker (2003) promotes the application of a human needs theory because, according to her research, this approach offers structure that can accommodate all levels of human needs and their related social issues and interests. Since individual and social conflicts occur because basic needs are not met or are not
satisfied, then the resolution of conflicts means meeting and satisfying basic needs at both the individual and societal levels.

**Human Needs Theory and Sex Tourism.** Within the Caribbean region, power imbalances exist at many levels, particularly at a gendered level (Kempadoo, 2001). Because sex tourism mostly involves male tourists and female sex providers, a gendered perspective of Human Needs theory applied to sex tourism is relevant. The needs of males sex providers present differently from the needs of female sex providers because of gender inequalities within the patriarchal societies where sex tourism occurs.

The power/gender inequalities of sending locations affect sex tourism too. Speaking to the needs of male sex tourists, Seabrook (2001) states,

> For as they take their strange hungers with them on their travels, as they seek to assuage who knows what ache and absences in their lives by running to distant places for something so commonplaces as sex, reassurance and tenderness, they are showing the limits of the rich market economies to answer many basic human needs (p. xv)

This passage not only demonstrates the power needs male sex tourists seek to fulfill through their engagement with females sex providers, but it also reveals the lack of (economic) power female sex providers have in their home locations since they are commodified. Sex tourists commodify sex providers’ bodies, and in return, the sex providers generate personal gains used to meet their basic needs. These gains can be food, shelter, esteem, identity, or belongingness. Which needs are met through sexual engagements with tourists seems to be demarcated by gender. Maslow’s (1943) comment on sex, fitting for male sex providers, is “One may make love not only for pure sexual release, but also to convince one's self of one's masculinity, or to make a conquest, to feel
powerful, or to win more basic affection” (p. 390). As Maslow indicates through this passage, sex can be used as leverage to meet both physical and non-physical needs. Examining which needs are met within sex tourism depends on whether the focus is on sex tourists or sex providers and the limits of their respective societies.

**Human Needs Theory, Sex Tourism, and Conflict.** Unmet needs can cause unforeseen consequences within the greater community, as indicated earlier in this chapter. Social problems associated with sex tourism can also be explained through the Human Needs theory lens as frustrations and acts of aggression stemming from unmet needs. The social infrastructure of a locale may be set up in such a way that while selling or trading one’s body for basic needs is socially unacceptable, it yields the greatest profit, thus maximizing the chances of survival. Such a social set up is not only common in the Caribbean, but indicative of a society and/or the government that is not helping its people meet basic needs, which, as Burton (1998) suggested, can lead to antisocial behaviors and society-level conflicts. The risks for conflict associated with this style of social establishment and the ways in which people then attempt to meet their needs are significant. If sex providers’ basic needs are not met or satisfied, for example, sex providers may revolt against their clients, managers, society, or themselves placing the entire society at risk for conflict.

Another source of conflict within sex tourism is that many sex tourism connections involve people already in committed relationships, or involves sexual relationships beyond the scope of social normalcy. These dynamics frame sex tourism as morally corrupt and socially deviant. Miles and Okamoto (2008) describe deviant behaviors as those that have resulted from “social strain related to the adversarial relationship between the [sex providers] and members within their community” (p. 437).
Evans, Forsyth, and Wooddell (2000) describe sexual deviance as one of three types: normal- common sexual deviance with low visibility, pathological- socially harmful, law breaking, and sociological-sexual deviance that takes social structures to create and perpetuate (Evans et al, 2000). Sex tourism, or as these researchers call it, erotic tourism, fits best with the sociological type of sexual deviance, and to some extent the pathological type also. Within the context of Human Needs theory, these antisocial behaviors occur because society is not meeting the needs of both the sex providers and sex tourists.

Macro-level institutional and societal infrastructures that deprive people of needs hinder the development of empathy, humanity, and healthy communities. Jeong (2000) names structural violence as social systems that indirectly and insidiously exploit and discriminate through organized means like politics, education, and social institutions (p. 20). Societies where certain populations’ basic needs are not met, or are denied, risk violent outbursts, more deaths, psychological damage, cultural oppression, and human incapacity (Jeong, 2000; Tilly, 2003). Understanding the concepts behind structural violence offers understanding to the causes of conflict inherent in institutional oppressions and economic despair, like sex tourism (Jeong, 2000). According to Jeong (2000), understanding why circumstances like sex tourism occur will be revealed through an examination of the causes of the institutional level conflicts and failures. Using one’s own body to satisfy basic needs is evidence of an unhealthy, apathetic society just as those who seek satisfaction of personal needs through the sexual exploitation of others is evidence of a failed society. In other words, these systemic failures have created an environment where sex tourism is not only a means for some to meet basic human needs but is encouraged by others through a perversion of gendered, sexist expectations. For
these reasons, that sex tourism is viewed as problematic is not opinion, but international consensus.

Theoretic Literature Review

To understand sex tourism, one must have a basic understanding of tourism because the former cannot happen without the latter. Defined as a “modern ritual” and the “epitome of freedom and personal choice characteristic of Western individualism”, tourism is said to be the necessary structured break from ordinary life, which involves travel taking its tourists to another moral state (Graburn, 1983). Tourism and sex tourism are multibillion-dollar industries; the largest international trade industries in the world (Bryan, 2001; Dunn and Dunn, 2002; Seabrook, 2001). Munshi (2006) states, “Commodification of tourism is part of overall capitalist commodification” (p. 4461).

The Caribbean region is completely dependent upon tourism and, therefore, is a commodified region (Bryan, 2001; Grandoit, 2005). Because of its location within the Caribbean, St. Thomas is the destination for over two million travelers a year; travelers who seek to experience another moral state (Graburn, 1983; USVI Bureau of Economic Research, 2012).

The majority of sex tourists are male and most sex providers are female. The most common form of sex tourism is through prostitution (Munshi, 2006; Seabrook, 2001; Shared Hope International, 2007). Sex tourism, however, is not only prostitution; it can include transactional sex or sex in exchange for something needed or desired (Kempadoo, 1999; Ryan and Hall, 2001). Ryan and Hall (2001) offer a compound definition for sex tourism revealing its complexities: sex tourism includes the production of videos, tourism related prostitution, romantic relationships, and a direct cash for sex exchange; sex tourism can take place online, in resorts, in brothels or in strip clubs.
These authors continue to say that the sex providers can be free-lance, sub-contracted, or enslaved persons of any gender or age; sex tourism is usually perpetrated by males from developed countries who travel to lesser-developed countries (Ryan and Hall, 2001).

Kempadoo (1999) uses the term tourism-oriented prostitution interchangeably with sex tourism and discusses the romance element between white female tourists and non-white Caribbean male sex providers; relationships that often include the purchase of gifts by the tourists to the sex providers. She also contrasts relations between non-white male Caribbean sex providers and white female tourists against non-white female Caribbean sex providers and male tourists finding a difference between these two types of relationships, (Kempadoo, 1999). Seabrook’s (2001) definition of sex tourism as traveling abroad for sex to do things with foreigners that you cannot do at home offers support to Graburn’s (1983) perspective that travelers seek to live in a different moral state when away from home.

Most research on sex tourism from around the world frames sex tourism in a negative light with negative implications for those involved, particularly female sex providers. Diaz-Laplante’s 2007 article on humanistic psychology discusses the significance politics plays in economics, particularly when addressing human needs. She argues that capitalism and human needs are incongruent and the root cause of poverty. Since poverty eradication is her goal, she seeks changing the old/current perspectives on free trade to a new position where human needs can be met. This article is valuable to this research because of the relation Diaz-Laplante (2007) makes between politics, economics, and human needs. St. Thomas and the rest of the Caribbean region fell into great economic despair when politically motivated structural adjustment programs were imposed. A negative outcome of these plans was that many people in this region were
failing to meet basic human needs (Grandoit, 2005; Munshi, 2006). Diaz-Laplante (2007) also offers valuable suggestions on how to initiate and implement social change, strategies this researcher has considered as part of this study.

While this dissertation does not focus on sex tourism involving minors, it should be noted that most adult female sex providers enter into the commercial sex industry as minors through trafficking (Burch, 2011; Kempadoo, 1999). Sex trafficking is intrinsically related to the sex tourism industry as the entry point into the industry. According to the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, there are direct ties between human trafficking and sex tourism. This act states “Trafficking of persons is an evil requiring concerted and vigorous action by countries of origin, transit or destination, and by international organizations” (Public Law 106-386, p. 1468). Furthermore, Raymond and Hughes (2001) cite a broader definition of sex trafficking to include adults as,

the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by the threat or use of force, by abduction, fraud, deception [inducement], coercion or the abuse of power, or by the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation [irrespective of the consent of the person]; exploitation shall include at a minimum [the exploitation of prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation] forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery [or servitude] (p. 13).

Because this definition includes coercion through gifts or payments to achieve consent for the purpose of sex, most acts of sex tourism align with this definition. This article goes on to link sex tourism as a major contributing factor to sex trafficking because of
certain nations’ or regions’ macro-level structural adjustments used to develop tourism dependent economies (Raymond and Hughes, 2001, p. 17). Shared Hope International’s (2007) report on sex tourism also involves sex trafficking, using the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 to define sex trafficking as “the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision or obtaining of a person for the purpose of commercial sex acts” (p. 1). Recognizing that sex tourism can take place between countries or between cities, Shared Hope International (2007) connects sex tourism with sex trafficking as the industry that satisfies tourists’ demand for sex through the use of trafficking facilitators. For this reason, a sex tourist providing gifts to a local sex provider in exchange for a sexual relationship can be considered harboring a sex trafficked individual regardless of whether or not the sex provider feels exploited.

A culture of tolerance for social ills including sex tourism has been identified in sex tourism research. Munshi (2006) defines a culture of tolerance as including a “relaxation of codes in respect to food, dress, liquor, and even sex during vacation” (p. 4466). The buying power tourists have over local sex providers through the commodification process that is tourism only adds to a culture of tolerance that many sex tourism researchers have identified. Seabrook’s (2001) focuses on the local culture of tolerance towards sex tourism reveals the social and economic power tourists have because of their whiteness/foreignness. His second chapter titled The Environment of the Sex Trade goes to great lengths to describe the many social and economic problems of Thailand that overshadow its sex tourism industry and the problems within it (Seabrook, 2001). Ryan and Hall (2001) and Munshi (2006) relate the development of Southeast Asia’s sex tourism industry with American military bases and Japanese colonialism, pointing out that these hosting nations have relied heavily on the economic development
and foreign exchange that militaries have brought in the past and sex tourists now bring
today. The economic boom from sex tourism in the region has been so significant, that
Japan alone spends as much on trafficking in females from throughout Asia to supply its
demand as it does on its national defense (US$30 billion) (Ryan and Hall, 2001).

Campbell, Perkins, and Mohammad (as cited in Kempadoo, 1999) describe the
cultural climate of sex tourism and prostitution in Jamaica as controlled by the police
whereby male police are not only clients of sex workers, but often work as pimps and
guards protecting the prostituted females. This set up makes it impossible for prostituted
females to appeal to law enforcement for safety and security adding support to the claim
that the needs met through sex tourism for sex providers present differently for male sex
providers than they do for female sex providers. It also fosters a level of distrust of
authority for Jamaicans since prostitution is technically illegal in that country. The
perpetuation of gender inequalities like these mentioned within the context of sex tourism
in tourist destinations continues to spin the cycle of permissiveness of this climate.

Shared Hope International (2007) compares research on sex tourism in four
different countries; Jamaica, Japan, The Netherlands, and the United States and identifies
a culture of tolerance in each of the four sex tourism locations it examined relating their
culture of tolerance to each countries’ historical, geographical, traditional, and legal
attitudes towards sex and its commodification. In Japan, for example, the strongly
enforced gender roles and the cultural belief that Japanese males ‘need’ sex has
normalized the industrialization of sexual services for both local and visiting men further
engendered by the “Geisha” – a female groomed and trained for the purpose of male
entertainment and dominance. Facilitators in Japan are organized crime syndicates, taxi
drivers, police officers, and transporters. In Jamaica, a culture of tolerance for the
commercial sex industry has been created and fostered by extreme poverty and ‘make do’ attitudes for survival in the wake of the once-booming tourism industry. Facilitators in Jamaica are primarily organized gang members, police officers, taxi drivers, and hotel staff. In the Netherlands, a centuries old culture of tolerance has long been in place resulting in the legalization of prostitution and the promotion of its Red Light district as a major tourist attraction. Netherlands facilitators are often not only organized gang members and taxi drivers, but also ‘loverboys’ or fake boyfriends, landlords, and tour operators. The culture of tolerance in the United States is perpetuated by the glamorization of the pimp/prostitute lifestyle while condoning lapses of morality when on vacation through slogans like ‘What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas’, for example. Facilitators in the United States are typically young pimps, taxi drivers, and hotel/club staff. Shared Hope International (2007) incorporates both primary and secondary sources from all aspects of the sex tourism phenomenon. This research has provided valuable objective information for this exploratory research on sex tourism in St. Thomas by identifying common social characteristics found in each of the four studied locations.

Tourism’s influence on the culture of tolerance for sex tourism and the objectification of others demonstrate the presence and power of patriarchal societies. Sex tourism’s insalubrious characteristics undermine empathy and compromise the health of societies through the oppression of targeted populations; a form of violence that is a “tragic expression of unmet human needs” (Haslanger, 2002; Kempadoo, 2001; KOK, 2007, p. 2). With the few exceptions of highly paid escorts, Hannum (2002) argues that sex tourism predominantly involves impoverished sex workers who are marginalized, experience violence, and suffer from disease and abuse. This is because sex tourists “help support a multi-billion dollar illegal commercial sex trafficking industry which
promotes violence and discrimination against women” (Fight Slavery Now, 2011). As stated before, trafficked women and children are most often trafficked for the sex tourism industry (Anantnarayan, 2011; Hannum, 2002; Shared Hope International, 2007). The effects of being trafficked and/or sexually exploited on the sex providers are seriously detrimental and often cause long term mental scarring and emotional harm. The communities of the sex providers suffer as well dealing with the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, violence, and crime often as residual affects of sex tourism (Bacon, 2007; Gates and Goodman, 2006).

Andrews (2004), Tan (2014), and Bacon (2007) identify the United States as one of the primary sending countries that provides an eager and affluent customer base, which shows that cultural aspects of the United States regarding empathy and gender equality are not healthy. The non-profit organization Fight Slavery Now (2009) estimates that the United States represents 25 percent of sex tourists worldwide. Thus, American tourists significantly help to perpetuate the global sex trade through their involvement in sex tourism and their beliefs in ideologies that foster a culture of tolerance for it. This information should be of concern for both St. Thomas and the mainland since nearly all of its tourists are from the mainland (United States Virgin Island Bureau of Economic Research, 2012). Furthermore sex tourism exists because of dysfunctional social systems of both the host and visiting cultures (Frohlick 2008; Jacobs, 2009; Meisch, 1995; Miller, 2011; Munshi, 2006; Niles, 2006; Sanchez Taylor, 2001).

Elaborating more on the social structures that create sex tourism, Eade’s 2009 article examines the intersections of sex, work, and tourism. Defining sex tourism as “the space where all three overlap”, Eade (2009) also recognizes that sex tourism can occur when only two of these three spaces meld. For example, ‘romance tourism’ is when
romantic feelings are shared between tourists and locals resulting in a mutually beneficial relationship and thus excluding the work realm. However, Eade (2009) also recognizes that more sex tourists are traveling abroad for their sexual experiences because they are not only cheaper abroad, but because the tourists can take more liberties acting out their sexual fantasies, like racial and dominance themed fantasies.

Trying to explain further how global sex tourism is related to the erosion of morality, Eade (2009) continues with a consideration of several factors. Because travel has been made more affordable to more people around the world, and because the Internet has made pornography accessible to anyone with a computer, the concept of sex tourism has become more popular in cultures from where sex tourists come, increasing the ambivalence about and involvement in commercialized sex (Eade, 2009). A result of these factors is an increase in the spread of sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS. The mainstream view of recreational sex, commercialize sex, and prostitution is still that it is amoral and erodes the integrity of the community. “Prostitution laws are intended to protect public health and welfare (including the suppression of sexually transmitted diseases)” (Schartzbach, n.d.). Other contributing factors to the sex tourism industry within the visited locations are poverty, limited reasonable work options, and the vast rich/poor, powerful/weak divide between tourists and locals (Diaz-Laplante, 2007; Eade, 2009). This researcher has found a similar moral demise and the same contributing factors to a sex tourism industry in St. Thomas.

Speaking to gender biases and limited employment opportunities within tourism, Munshi’s (2006) work is again relevant. She directly relates sex tourism with power inequalities by describing how capitalism and the globalization of tourism have commodified all things tourist related to benefit the tourists. The commodification
process has left developing countries that were pushed into tourism with sexist and racist social and workplace hierarchies. Over half of all men working in the tourism industry are directors, managers, or professionals of some type, whereas women occupy positions as kitchen staff, domestic cleaner, counter help, and other part-time, less stable, lower paying positions (Munshi, 2006). Females of tourist destinations have also been pushed into sex tourism by governments, tourism organizations, and overall economic condition. Additionally, because many of those involved in sex tourism as local sex providers (both males and females) are not directly from the main tourist areas or are of low class in the tourist areas, their sexual exploitation is not considered problematic by the general populace or by the host governments (Munshi, 2006). This researcher feels these sentiments may also be at play in St. Thomas. This dynamic adds to a culture of tolerance for sex tourism.

**Sex Tourism Literature Review**

As Sri Lanka’s popularity grew as a tourist destination in the early 1980’s, so too grew the problem of sexual exploitation for Sri Lankan females by wealthy Western tourists (Miller, 2011). The social and economic dynamics and gender inequalities within Sri Lanka push for the economic and sexual exploitation of Sri Lanka’s vulnerable populations, particularly its females. Miller’s (2011) study is similar to this research in that it too is a case study utilizing field observations, formal interviews, and informal conversations as data sources. Miller’s (2011) findings parallel the findings of this research, whereby both studies found resentments between tourists and locals due to power inequalities, both studies found that image and reputation matter significantly to the local population, and both studies found that a culture of tolerance facilitated sex tourism.
It is not just the visited country or destination that creates exploitative dynamics for its vulnerable populations. Western sending countries are just as abusive by creating a demand for the exploitation of marginalized people, particularly females. Jacobs (2009) and Meisch (1995) reveal how European and North American women seek greater gender equality and sexual freedoms abroad through racialized and often times exploitative relationships with Arab men in South Egypt’s Sinai region, and Otavalenos in Ecuador, respectively. An examination of these authors’ work reveals that the home cultures of the traveling women are sexist and oppressive, explaining why they seek power elsewhere through their racial and economic status. However, the locations these female tourists’ visited are also sexist. The local female populations suffer great inequalities relative to the male population. Only when female tourists decide to live permanently in their visited locations do they too realize their female status still renders them less powerful relative to their male counterparts demonstrating that the host societies’ patriarchal hierarchies value maleness first, capital gains second, and then whiteness over human rights and gender equality (Every Culture, n.d.; U.S. Department of State, 2010). Very similar dynamics exist in St. Thomas in that the local culture operates in a patriarchal, sexist way prioritizing capital gain over gender and ethnic equality.

Hedman, Nygren, and Fahlgren’s (2009) article discusses how Swedish men travel to Thailand to find wives to bring back to Sweden, and the problems these interethnic couples encounter in Sweden. Viewing this article through the Human Needs theoretical lens highlights the needs of Swedish society to feel safe and secure. Swedish newspapers view Thai-Swedish couples as a social problem disrupting Sweden’s homogeneity. Because newspaper articles refer to Thai-Swedish relationships as a social
problem, it is perceived that the health and security of Swedes have been jeopardized and those labeled ‘not-Swedish’ or ‘other’ are to blame. The projected message is that Sweden would be better, safer, and healthier if these interethnic relationships did not occur in Sweden. The cultural norm of viewing non-white/Westerners as other, and therefore bad or unhealthy, may be the driver for some Swedish men who do not agree with this norm. As Thailand is an escape for such Swedish men, St. Thomas may be an escape for tourists who feel inhibited in their homelands.

Studying the sex tourists, Ryan and Kinder (1996) describe their behaviors as liminal and “fuzzy”. They argue that, by definition, vacationing is paying for experiences. Purchasing sex from sex workers while on vacation is a prime example of marginal or liminal (these authors use these words interchangeably) economic behaviors of tourists. They state that sex tourists’ motives are similar to the motives of tourists in general, in that tourists feel uninhibited while on holiday, and, therefore seek the satisfaction of their normally inhibited desires (Ryan & Kinder, 1996). Ryan and Kinder’s (1996) article introduces characteristics of liminal or marginal behavior within a tourism context, and the needs that liminal behaviors meet for both the tourists and the sex workers. This article also discusses the role of power within the prostitute/tourist relationship, an important element to this particular research.

In an age before the internet, de Albuquerque (1998, 1999) compares and contrasts the sex tourism industry in the Caribbean with Southeast Asia. He remarked that the industry seemed less degrading because those involve seemed to have more free will due to the sex industry being less organized in the Caribbean. De Albuquerque’s (1998, 1999) position that Caribbean sex tourism is race driven corresponds with Boodram’s (2001) article on sex tourism in the Caribbean. Both articles discuss female
sex tourists who travel to the Caribbean looking for ‘beach bums’ or ‘rent-a-rastas’ for sexual services (Boodram, 2001). Through his study of sex tourism in Barbados, Jamaica, and the Dominican Republic, de Albuquerque (1998, 1999) argues that female sex tourist’ motives are no different from male sex tourists’ motives, where both are driven by racialized sexual fantasies (p.92). This motive has resonated among the male interviewees involved in this research. De Albuquerque (1999) also mentions facilitators like pimps, taxi drivers and bartenders, and their roles in creating a culture of tolerance within the sex tourism industry.

Huda’s (2006) article reveals the numerous social ills associated with sex trafficking for the sex tourism industry. Huda (2006) also blames the sex industry and sex tourism for ongoing human rights violations, exploitation, the uncontrolled spread of sexually transmitted diseases, and human trafficking globally. Beatings, murders, and torture are just a few tactics involved in controlling, concealing, and protecting of trafficked persons. Beale’s (2011) article titled The Infamous Link Between Sex Trafficking, Sex Tourism, and Sporting Events- What Lies Ahead for Brazil, discusses how sex tourism and sex trafficking are interrelated through the tourism industry. The increased number of tourists who visit Brazil each year has been directly related to the increase in number of trafficked individuals (Beale, 2011). Sex trafficking is also known to take place in St. Thomas.

Shared Hope International (2007) compares research on sex tourism in four different countries; Jamaica, Japan, The Netherlands, and the United States (2007). This document defines sex tourism, establishes the connection between sex tourism and human trafficking, and explains how a culture of tolerance exists in each of the examined locations. This article describes a culture of tolerance as “derived from a country’s
history, ethnicity, religious practice, language, political and economic system, and other influences” (p. 17). In Jamaica, facilitators are primarily organized gang members, police officers, taxi drivers, and hotel staff. Jamaica’s culture of tolerance is steeped in its high level of poverty. In the Netherlands, facilitators often are not only organized gang members and taxi drivers, but also ‘loverboys’ or fake boyfriends, landlords, and tour operators. Facilitators in the United States are typically young pimps, taxi drivers, and hotel/club staff. A culture of tolerance in the United States is perpetuated by what is called the ‘pimp culture’—the glorification of a lifestyle condoning drug use, prostitution, and violence. In Japan, facilitators are organized crime syndicates, taxi drivers, police officers, and transporters. The culture of tolerance in Japan has been partly engendered by the “Geisha” – a female groomed and trained for the purpose of male entertainment and dominance. Shared Hope International (2007) incorporates both primary and secondary sources from all aspects of the sex tourism phenomenon. This research has provided valuable objective information for this exploratory research on sex tourism in St. Thomas by identifying common social characteristics found in each of the four studied locations.

**Regional Commonalities**

Sanchez Taylor’s (2001) article discusses the difficulties in defining sex tourism due to gender differences between tourists and locals. She calls for the application of a more inclusive theory to accommodate the gamut of possible definitions of sex tourism and the complex power relations within them. Examining survey responses of female sex tourists who traveled to Jamaica and the Dominican Republic, Sanchez Taylor found that most often there was an economic element embedded in the relationships the females had with the local males where the female tourists provided the male sex providers with some form of economic benefit like a meal, a hot shower, or place to stay. Likewise, based on
her survey, she found that safe sex was only practiced 67 percent of the time. Similar to Sanchez Taylor’s (2001) report of people living below the poverty line, 44 percent in Dominican Republic and one third in Jamaica respectively. In her study, Sanchez Taylor (2001) reports that local male’s involvement in sex tourism is needs based. Likewise, her study reveals entrenched gender biases of male sex providers and reinforced racist attitudes of female tourists, biases and attitudes this researcher also found evidence of during her research for this dissertation.

Like Sanchez Taylor (2001), Smith and Ashiabi (2007) studied poverty in Jamaica and revealed that a disproportionate percentage of forced sex and sexual exploitation among impoverished females is for financial gain, and not necessarily their own. Given the context of poverty in their research, Smith and Ashiabi (2007) connect being a poor Jamaican female with a high probability of sexual exploitation. Sex work for these females is a means of survival because it is a way to meet basic human needs. Though the authors do not overtly announce who is exploiting Jamaican females, they do state that Jamaica’s main source of income is tourism (Smith and Ashiabi, 2007). The USAID 2007 report confirms that sex tourism is the major reason for the trafficking and sexual exploitation of its most vulnerable populations. Smith and Ashiabi (2007) and the USAID (2007) report have also found Jamaica to have one of the highest HIV/AIDS rates in the Caribbean; rates that are disproportionately higher for females relative to males of the same age groups. Whether forced or voluntary, females in Jamaica are involved in sex work/sex tourism because of an unsupportive, patriarchal socioeconomic infrastructure (Smith and Ashiabi, 2007). Smith and Ashiabi’s (2007) research reveals similarities between St. Thomas and Jamaica regarding the sexual exploitations of young females, early sexual initiation and sex tourism.
Void in de Albuquerque’s 1998 and 1999 articles, Boodram (2001), Huda (2006) and Carmichael (2009) also mention the more grisly side effects of sex tourism as it relates to human trafficking, exploitation and the spread of HIV/AIDS. Boodram (2001) states that sex tourism is a contributing factor to the spread of HIV/AIDS and other diseases, and undermines economic sustainability attempts made by many struggling Caribbean nations. Bryan (as cited in Boodram, 2001) reports nine out of 12 countries in the Americas with the highest HIV prevalence rates are in the Caribbean. The categories of people most infected with HIV and AIDS are those in the most economically and sexually productive age categories, undermining national sustainable development potential for the region’s future.

By interviewing white female tourists, Weichselbaumer (2012) addresses the dissonance white female tourists create when they engage in sexual relations with black Caribbean men. Focusing her research on Trinidad and Tobago, she highlights that racial, sexist, and financial motivations behind some sex tourist relations may not be the only explanation for female driven sex tourism. She also mentions how racially profiling black Caribbean men compares with white Western men. For example she states, as a result of white female tourists having sexual relations with black Caribbean men, white men fear sexual inferiority and therefore fear miscegenation. Furthermore, what others have referred to as liminal behavior, Weichselbaumer (2012) calls carnivalesque, a reference to the Caribbean region’s practice of carnivaling; “a …time in itself as it allows the suspension of traditional rules outside of the daily work regime” (p.1221).

Comparing and contrasting concepts of sex tourism with romance tourism, as well as presenting an argument for and against the existence of male sex workers within patriarchal societies, this author portrays the many complexities that make up Caribbean
sex tourism. Weichselbaumer’s (2012) article offers support to this research for concepts pertaining to liminal behavior, sex tourism in the Caribbean, and gender divides in patriarchal societies.

Also struggling to pin down a definition for sex tourism, Herold, Garcia, and DeMoya (2001) offer a unique approach to studying Caribbean sex tourism by interviewing both male and female sex tourists as well as male and female sex workers in the Dominican Republic. Through their interviews, these researchers have identified a gendered double standard between the sex providers. Male sex providers had other jobs and were not completely dependent on the income or benefits they gained from their sexual relations with tourists, unlike female sex providers. This same dynamic has been observed in St. Thomas. Also mirroring what this researcher had found in St. Thomas, Herold, Garcia, and DeMoya (2001), established that male sex workers attained social status through their sexual relations with tourists, whereas female sex workers did not. The seduction process, as these researchers call it, includes male sex providers displaying their physical fitness on the beach in front of white tourists, demonstrating their dancing skills in the dance halls for white tourists, and flattering white tourists with compliments and flattery. Female sex workers, on the other hand, operate out of brothels, bars, and restaurants while the pimps work the streets to recruit male tourists, much like the barkers of St. Thomas. This study offers a different perspective on sex tourism in the Caribbean because it took place on a Spanish-speaking island that has a history of catering to male sex tourists. It also highlighted many similarities with other research like the hierarchical preference male sex workers have for white female tourists. Many of the findings in this article directly relate to St. Thomas, perhaps due to its large Dominican Republican population.
Kamala Kempadoo has written many works on Caribbean sexuality and tourism and the problems therein, lending importance to this dissertation research. One piece of work in particular is her article titled *Freelancers, temporary wives, and beach-boys: Researching sex work in the Caribbean* (2001). In this article, Kempadoo (2001) shares with her readers the history of sex work in the Caribbean starting with colonial times through to today’s current trends. She involves the evolution of tourism in the Caribbean region with modern day sex tourism, sex trafficking, and the problems associated with the sex trade industry. Also mentioned are the connections between the rise in tourist numbers to the region with STD rates, particularly HIV/AIDS. The methodologies used in this study included interviews, observations, and focus groups. One point Kempadoo (2001) raised resounds for this research and that was:

The fact that prostitution was by and large an illegal activity yet lined the pockets of so many a business person, police officer, or government official …meant that probes and investigations by, in particular, feminist, researchers into the field could be viewed as a challenge to state or male complicity in the sex trade.

This article was the first for the region to collaboratively report on the Caribbean commercial sex industry that identified intersections of gender, ethnicity, and race within sex tourism. The findings of this article parallel what this researcher found in St. Thomas’s sex tourism industry.

Collectively, all of these studies and articles provide a rich and comprehensive background to the many aspects of sex tourism by reporting on the difficulties of defining sex tourism, the social ills sex tourism generates, and the human rights abuses directly linked with sex tourism. Literature on both male and female sex tourism from within and
beyond the Caribbean region has been cited, offering a wide array of theoretical perspectives. Each article relates to sex tourism in a unique way that has informed this case study research in St. Thomas. These sources delineate the gamut of sex tourism while revealing the systemic infrastructures of domination and abuse that are often involved.
Chapter Three: Methodology

Qualitative methodology was chosen for this research for its allowance of complex understandings of multifaceted phenomena like sex tourism (Stake, 1995). Answering the question ‘does sex tourism exist in St. Thomas’ requires a complete understanding of all of St. Thomas’ social fabric and make up. This requirement hinders a quantitative methodological approach, a style that attempts to generalize data, and considers any uniqueness of a study as erroneous or as an outlier better to dismiss rather than a focal point of intrigue. For this reason, a quantitative approach was not used (Stake 1995). Sex tourism is a social phenomenon best understood within the qualitative social science realm.

This case study is a qualitative research design whereby the researcher selected a particular case, e.g., person, place, activity, or event, to study for the purpose of gaining a greater understanding of that case (Creswell, 2003; Creswell, 2007). A case must be bound either by time, setting, or activity. Like ethnography, case study examines the culture within a case. Unlike ethnography, case study researchers intend to understand a particular problem within the case (Creswell, 2007). The geographic area for this case studied was St. Thomas, United States Virgin Islands, and is bounded physically by water. The issue or problem examined within this case was sex tourism.

This researcher employed a collective or intrinsic case study approach that identified one issue (sex tourism) and studied various data sources to understand and illustrate that issue (Stake, 1995). Utilizing various data sources to substantiate and validate meaning, known as data triangulation, is an effective way to build a rich case study (Creswell, 2003; Stake, 1995; ). These data sources package the case holistically, meaning the whole case is studied to understand the entirety of the issue, not just specific
aspects of the case, like an embedded study would suggest (Creswell, 2007). Since this research was exploratory in nature, the holistic approach was taken to discern whether or not sex tourism exists in St. Thomas. The motive behind an exploratory approach for St. Thomas’s first examination of sex tourism was to allow for the consideration of a multitude of contributing factors to the problem. Also taking into consideration for the effectiveness of a study, Stake (1995) advises a researcher to identify the best people and places to consult for data collection. Having personal knowledge of the case at hand has helped this researcher navigate this phase. That this researcher has spent over four years collectively living on St. Thomas has been advantageous in the data collection process because she was able to use her social networking skills to aid in developing rapport, assist with identifying social patterns, and understand the political culturing of the island.

This study utilized three separate sources for data: the internet, field observations, and formal semi-structured personal interviews. The Internet was chosen as a data source because other locations known to be sex tourism havens place a heavy reliance on the Internet for advertising and marketing sexual interests (Eades, 2009; Huda 2006; Shared Hope International, 2007). Both sex providers and sex tourists are known to use Internet websites as facilitating tools. Field observations allowed for an assessment of the day-to-day life in St. Thomas. Just as in ethnographic studies, case studies also permit data to be sourced from researchers who are immersed within the cases they study. In this example, the researcher lived on and experienced the seasonal pulses of the island in an effort to chronicle, describe, and learn the culture through observing behaviors, engaging in conversations, reading newspapers articles, and being directly involved in the daily living on the island. Such observations provided a rich context for the studied case (Creswell, 2007). Formal semi-structured interviews with sex providers, the third data
source, offered different perspectives for understanding sex tourism in St. Thomas. These first hand accounts of life within the case presented a greater understanding of how the case and the problem are interrelated. This researcher acknowledges that each approach and method has its limitations, however, the collective use of separate data sources has neutralized these limitations (Creswell, 2003).

The analysis phase of a case study occurs when themes or codes from collected data became apparent (Stake, 1995). Analysis can happen simultaneously with data collection, or later when the data is being reviewed (Stake, 1995). Interpretations and conclusions of the themes and codes gleaned from each data source make up the final phase of a case study analysis. This last step required the researcher to find meaning and understanding from the data through a coding process as it related to the issue of the case (Creswell, 2007). The Human Needs theory provided a framework for understanding the meaning of this data as it related to sex tourism.

Using technology like an iPhone and a laptop computer aided note taking and data storing. The iPhone enhanced the ability to take notes at both the beach and nightclub settings. All observations were typed and saved shortly after their occurrences on the researcher’s personal laptop computer. The iPhone was set to back up to iCloud every hour and to the computer every time it was connected. The laptop computer was backed up to an external hard drive at least once a week since data was collected. Both electronic devices have access security codes and tracking devices for added security in the event that they would be lost or stolen. The computer files are partitioned and encrypted using the encrypting and storing program DocWallet. As per IRB protocol, all data relating to the participants involved in this research will be destroyed three years after completion of this study in an effort to ensure the participants’ protection.
Triangulated Data

**Internet.** A portion of this research pertains to a collection of data relating to Internet websites. Locations known to be sex tourist havens have very active Internet dialogs linked to sex tourism in their areas (Bender and Furman, 2004; Eade, 2009; Kunze, 2010; Shared Hope International, 2007). To this point, in preparation for the World Cup, Brazilian police tried to shut down over 2,000 sex tourism websites recognizing that the Internet is a tool sex tourists from around the world would try to use while in Brazil (Timerman, 2013). Shared Hope International (2007) identified Google and Craigslist as primary Internet advertising sources for exploited women involved in the sex tourism industry. Also considered in that report is the prevalence of cell phone use in the sex tourism industry, “Cell phones also allow facilitators to take a picture of the [sex provider], and send it to a prospective buyer, all with relative anonymity” (Shared Hope International, 2007, p.108). Cell phone applications (apps) facilitate sex tourism by either being a source exclusively for sex tourists or by facilitating the connections between sex providers and sex tourists. Because of the difficulty in ascertaining data from these apps, and because of the ease of aggregating data from Craigslist, Craigslist data specific to St. Thomas’s personal advertisements was analyzed in this research.

An analysis of Craigslist’s personal advertisements has added support to the data category ‘internet’. This analysis helped show that sex tourism does exist in St. Thomas. Craigslist has a reputation for being a known source for sex, and also because it is actively used in St. Thomas by locals and tourists, it is free, and it does not require the user to set up an account or a profile. Other features that make Craigslist popular for sex tourists in general are: 1) unlike many other sex service sites that require only a face picture, pictures of any body part or anything can be posted without any consequences; 2)
the postings are not just of links to other websites that require profiles and/or credit card information; 3) it is location specific (meaning it can advertise a person’s specific location like a hotel or a restaurant); 4) and, it is live, making its postings and responses instantaneous (Varawalla, 2009). For these ease-of-use reasons, Craigslist in other locations has been consistently linked with illegal behaviors like prostitution, human trafficking, and sex tourism (Celizic, 2008; Dart v. Craigslist, Inc., 2009; Kunze, 2010; Munshi, 2006; Padilla and Castellanos, 2008; Shared Hope International, 2007). Tourists and locals alike can freely advertise on Craigslist their interests for the moment, the day, or weeks in advance, making it an attractive venue for anyone interested in having sex at any time in any location. Using data triangulation, the information procured from the Craigslist analysis has offered another perspective on the existence of sex tourism in St. Thomas, separate from those of the field observations and formal semi-structured interviews.

Many short hand, abbreviated coded terms are used on the Internet in general and particularly on dating or personal websites including Craigslist. The most common codes related to one’s search interest. For example, a man interested in dating or meeting a woman would post m4w indicating a man is searching for a woman. If a man is searching for another man, then m4m is displayed. If couples are seeking or being sought out then one might post m4mw, where mw represents a heterosexual couple. The slang term ‘down low’ or dl means discretion should be applied or that the relationship is to be a secret. Other common personal advertisement acronyms are: ‘iso’- in search of, ‘hwp’- height and weight proportionate, ‘bbw’- big beautiful woman, or overweight women, ‘bbc’-big black cock, or black penis, ‘mwm’- married white male, and ‘nsa’- no strings attached, meaning no relationship required or desired.
Only Craigslist postings indicating tourist/local interests were selected for this research, tallied and categorized. Data from the following six months have been analyzed: July 2012, September 2013, October 2013, November 2013, January 2014, and February 2014. These months have been selected for the purpose of reflecting phases of the tourism season (Graph 1.). Low tourist season is from May through October with high tourist season being from November through the end of April. The status of people who made the Craigslist postings have been categorized as: ‘current tourist’, a tourist on island at the time of the posting; ‘future tourist’, someone planning a trip to St. Thomas in the near future; and ‘local’, someone residing in St. Thomas during the time of the posting (Graph 2.). The Craigslist data has also been categorized by the searchers’ interest. All tourist related postings with a homosexual interest such as man looking for a man (m4m), man looking for a woman, man, or both (m4mw/m/w), a gay couple looking for a man (mm4m), and a heterosexual couple looking for another female or another couple (mw4w/mw) have all be categorized as ‘homosexual’. Tourist related postings showing an interest in a woman looking for a man (w4m) or a man looking for a woman (m4w) have been categorized as heterosexual (Graph 3.). No ‘woman looking for a woman’ tourist related postings (w4w) or ‘woman looking for a couple’ (w4wm) tourist related postings were found.

**Field Observations.** Case study research relies on data collected from various sources so that a complete picture of the case can be formed. One such data source comes from field observations. Willis (2007) describes field observations as work that puts “the researcher in the settings that he or she wants to study… in the natural environment rather than in an artificially contrived setting” (p. 235). Observations must be relevant to the issue because the researcher must draw assertions or conclusions from
the events observed (Stake, 1995). These conclusions help with the understanding of the case being studied by compiling them with scholarship, understandings within the researcher, and personal experiences (Stake, 1995). A detailed description is necessary for providing a context of the issue studied within the case (Stake, 1995).

For data collection purposes, over the course of these last two years in St. Thomas, this researcher had strategically positioned herself at several specific locations where tourists and locals intermingle in an effort to gain access and acceptance, and to objectively observe behaviors, understand motives, and assess motives as they pertained to sex tourism (Stake, 1995). Likewise, this researcher had reconnected with specific people who offered valuable information to this research, just as Stake (1995) suggests.

Observations, interactions, and conversations took place at public beaches, restaurants, and nightclubs where tourists and locals are known to socially intermingle. There were some specific behaviors this researcher expected to see demonstrated by both tourists and locals that would indicate sexual interest or availability (Appendix B). The reasoning behind this expectation is based on the observations other researchers have noted in their Caribbean sex tourism studies (de Albuquerque, 1998, 1999; Herold, Garcia and DeMoya, 2001). Just as De Albuquerque (1999) and Herold and associates (2001) reported the approach male beach workers use for white female tourists in their research, similar approaches in St. Thomas were observed. De Albuquerque (1999) reported beach workers starting conversations with tourists with “How are you enjoying your stay?” “How do you like the beach?” “Is this your first visit to Barbados?” Herold and associates (2001) have witnessed male sex workers make similar initial approaches with tourists on the beaches or streets of the Dominican Republic. The male workers
would wear big smiles in an effort to make and maintain eye contact with female tourists. The males would offer to be tour guides, personal chaperones, or dance instructors.

De Albuquerque (1998, 1999), Padilla (2008), Padilla and Castellanos, (2008), Frohlick, (2008), and Herold, Garcia and DeMoya (2001) developed rapports with local residents in order to eventually interview local sex providers, and this researcher adopted the same strategy. They observed various strategies of locals attempting to engage in and initiate physical contact with tourists, most often in settings where sun, sand, and water were involved or where music, dancing, and alcohol were prevalent. Frohlick (2008) relied on conversations, including gossip, with other foreign women about their relations with local men. Local males’ attempts to connect with tourists, as mentioned in Herold, Garcia, and DeMoya’s (2001) report, were the types of attempts this researcher had personally witnessed at one particular beach in St. Thomas called Coki Beach. Herold and associates (2001) noted eye contact between locals and tourists as a first-stage approach, beach performances of some sort like soccer or beach volleyball to show prowess. Dancing, including wining (a dance style that allows intimate physical body contact between the two dancing partners) has been noted by these authors as more progressive attempts. Weichselbaumer (2012) speaks to this quintessential Caribbean environment as carnivalesque (based on each island’s annual Carnival festival); licentiousness, physical abandon, and sexual excess set to the rhythm of music and dance that fosters sexual relations between local men and Western female tourists. These behaviors have been found to lead up to sex tourism in other Caribbean sex tourism research, and have been observed in St. Thomas as well (Boodram, 2001; de Albuquerque, 1999; Herold, Garcia and DeMoya, 2001).
Another major data source included with field observations were newspaper articles. The primary method of informing St. Thomas residents is the primary newspaper for the territory, The Virgin Island Daily News. This newspaper reports local news, highlights of other Caribbean headlines, issues from the mainland, and major international affairs. It also reports the daily and weekly cruise ship schedule; a major determining factor for island life affecting traffic patterns, business operations, beach population, and even Internet availability. Newspaper reports on island events provide context for the St. Thomas culture where sex tourism occurs. Island apathy and a culture of tolerance are undoubtedly influenced by events reported in the Daily News. Shootings, theft, and corruption reports can be read in the paper nearly daily. Since this research is focused on how the presence of sex tourism influences the social ills of the island, the newspaper was an important data source included with field observations.

**Interviews.** Like observing, interviewing is a key part of qualitative data collection. Interviewing allows for the consideration additional and in depth perspectives of the case and issue. This particular research included data not only from formal semi-structured interviews with sex providers, but also multiple supporting informal interviews with beach lifeguards, taxi drivers, strippers, bartenders, hotel staff, and other community members gathered during field observations. The formal semi-structured interviews with sex providers took place after Nova Southeastern University’s Institutional Review Board granted permission to conduct this study on August 8\(^{th}\), 2013. The identification and selection of interviewees came from a combination of sources. Key informants, peer recommendations, snowball sampling, and random selection were the methods this researcher utilized to acquire the formal semi-structured interviews.
Once it was determined that the formal interview candidates met the qualifying criteria to be formally interviewed, the interview participants were informed as to the purpose of the consent form waiver, and why they should keep it. The researcher explained that their participation was completely voluntary, that they would receive no benefits for participation, and that the researcher would keep their involvement in this study completely anonymous. Should they have had any questions, comments, or concerns about their participation, this researcher advised them to use the contact information on the waiver. All participants willingly spoke about their sexual relationships with tourists. Each personal interview lasted between 45 minutes and an hour, except for Sofia’s, which lasted approximately two hours. All interviews took place in public spaces. The participants’ names have been changed to protect their identity.

The interviews consisted of several key ‘issue-oriented’, open-ended questions (Appendix C)(Stake, 1995). Arrangements for these interviews were made over the phone and in person. Note taking immediately after each interview, rather than during, was a conscious decision in consideration of the location of interviews and the comfort of the interviewees. The subjects may not have been comfortable with a female interviewer equipped with pen and paper, for fear that if their peers saw this, they might have assumed the interview was for a legal matter or a social work purpose, thus compromising both the interviewees’ and the researcher’s status. Instead, during the interviews, reflective listening skills were employed. Note taking immediately after the interviews also helped retain clarity and accuracy of the interviews’ contents. On several occasions, the researcher exercised member-checking skills, whereby she sought clarification on discussion points both in person and via text messaging. All but two
interviews required the researcher to connect with the interviewees a second time because of ambiguity on certain points. According to Creswell (2003) the process of member checking assures the interviewer’s accuracy of understanding and comprehension of the subject. Once clarification was achieved, there was no further contact with the interviewees regarding their research participation.

Coding

The coding process included data collected from all three data sources. Though some coding took place as field observation data and Internet data were collected, the process of coding and analysis for the interviews was initiated once accuracy with the interviews was confirmed through member checking. To code data is to initiate the analysis phase of qualitative research (Saldana, 2009). A researcher ascribes a code or a themed term to a particular section of a field note, an interview passage, an observation, or a document with the intention of that code symbolically representing a greater meaning for the researcher. Because a theory was already selected for the framework of this dissertation, some of the codes were pre-determined as a way to directly relate the analysis with the research question (Saldana, 2009).

During this study’s first cycle coding, the process that happens during the initial coding phase, this researcher utilized mostly descriptive codes. Because of the variety of data sources, descriptive coding is most effective and efficient (Saldana, 2009). Descriptive codes used in this research, like risk, tourist-initiated, and alcohol were identified because of the frequency with which they occurred in the researcher’s notes. These codes allowed this researcher the ability to quickly glance at the notes and determine their contents.
Second cycle coding is a more in-depth, analytic approach to first cycle coding. Saldana (2009) states that second cycle coding methods are “a bit more challenging because they require such analytic skills as classifying, prioritizing, synthesizing, abstracting, conceptualizing, and theory building “ (p.45). The second cycle coding of this research favored the predetermined theory of Human Needs. An example of the two processes together follows: the first cycle codes of risk and thrill became competition in the second cycle of coding. The thought process was that risk and thrill were common sentiments raised by the male sex providers regarding their involvement with female tourists. In context, it was a challenge for the males to engage in sexual relations with tourists, a risky, thrilling competition not with others, but a challenge within themselves.

Competition among peers was another first cycle code that did not specifically include words such as risk and thrill. These two first cycle codes fell under the broader second cycle code of Competition, which also included storytelling. After further consideration, this researcher decided that storytelling would also consist of references to gossiping, rumors, or stories people have shared with this researcher. The fact that people knew of others’ stories relating to sex with tourists indicated that there was an element of competition or comparison among those sharing such stories. Competitions among peers, storytelling, and risk or thrill were categorized under the greater heading of Competition, which was linked to the identity needs of status and belonging. Figure 1. depicts the relationships among the first cycle codes (blue boxes), the second cycle codes (red boxes), and the thematic categories (green boxes) as they relate to basic human needs.
Creswell (2003) supports categorizing coded data in this manner, “Case study … research involves a detailed description of the setting or individuals, followed by analysis of the data for themes or issues” (p. 191). Key terms found from the observations, interviews, and the Internet assisted in the creation of the themes or categories. This researcher used themes like other scholars had done. Bender and Furman’s (2004) article report and analyze on sex tourism is sectioned out into themes based on their qualitative observations. De Albuquerque (1998, 1999), Weichselbaumer (2012), and Herald and associates (2001) also used a thematic breakdown of their qualitative observations from
their sex tourism research as section headings in their articles. The observed behaviors, field observations, qualitative interviews, and the Internet assessments of this research have provided a rich foundation for a comprehensive understanding of sex tourism in St. Thomas (Stake, 1995; Willis, 2007).

One note about the coding process should be mentioned. This researcher struggled with categorizing one reoccurring theme or code because of its applicability to all the categories and its influence on human needs. This theme was ‘culture of tolerance’. Newspaper articles, documents, conversations, observations, and behaviors frequently indicated or referenced a culture of tolerance for sex tourism that were so regular, this researcher decided it would be best if it were considered an overarching theme to all of the codes and categories. Because of a culture of tolerance, power and autonomy needs are met through acts of resentment, status is affirmed through competition, and physical needs are met through transactional sex. For these reasons, this researcher considers a culture of tolerance as the backdrop or context for all other codes that are categorized within the human needs themes.

Validity

Validity measures in a qualitative study are essential to the integrity of the research. Validity pertains to “the accuracy, meaningfulness, and credibility of the research project as a whole” (Leedy and Ormond, 2005, p. 101). This research used triangulation to support its validity and real-life settings as its external validity instrument. Utilizing an assortment of data collection techniques and analyzing the data from each source through triangulation permitted this researcher to paint a more complete picture of sex tourism on St. Thomas than what using just one data source alone would have offered.
External validity references a study’s generalizability, which is the ability of a study’s findings to be applied to other similar cases in other locations (Stake, 1995). To keep qualitative research grounded within its context, Willis (2007) warns that over-generalizing human behaviors with broad sweeping statements can compromise the true understanding of a study’s meaning. To address this concern for this dissertation, Stake’s (1995) breakdown of generalizations into two types, petite and grand, will be applied to this research. Therefore, since many of this study’s findings can be generalized to the greater Caribbean region, as mentioned in the first chapter of this dissertation, it is appropriate to consider external validity measures. Observations made in a human’s natural setting using unobtrusive measures yield more genuine results than if a researcher examined human behavior in a lab or in a synthetic environment (Leedy and Ormond, 2005; Willis, 2007). Qualitative research of this kind, conducted in other Caribbean tourist destinations with similar results, supports the generalization of this specific research’s findings (Willis, 2007). Therefore, the results of this research can be added to the wider body of Caribbean sex tourism literature, bolstering the study’s external validity. In sum, key strategies used to boost this study’s overall validity were: extensive time in the field, detailed explanation, and data triangulation (Leedy and Ormond, 2005).

Reliability

Like validity, reliability is equally important to qualitative research. Without consistent, structurally sound, reliable data collection methods, errors in conclusions or inductive reasoning are possible (Leedy and Ormond, 2005, p. 32). Therefore, transparency of methodology is vital in overcoming any biases associated with studies where researchers are the instruments for data collection (Willis, 2007). Sensitive to this limitation, this researcher strived for consistency in design so that collected data
demonstrated a level of consistency (Leedy and Ormond, 2005; Willis, 2007). Two particular ways reliability was addressed were through the use of a standardized observation chart (Appendix B) and through the use of a formal interview questionnaire (Appendix C). Each participant interviewed was asked the same general questions. Overall, sound validity and reliability efforts have provided this research with credible social data.

**Risks**

As with any research, there is at least minimal risk involved for the participants. Participants (sex providers) who agreed to be interviewed risked negative emotional conjuring. This researcher asked personal questions about the participants’ sex lives. Discussing the topic of sex tourism with the participant could have induced latent emotions. Had this been the case, this researcher would have reitered the voluntary nature of the participants’ involvement and offered a recommendation for counseling. Given the general openness of sexuality in St. Thomas, and knowing such conversations regularly take place within social settings, this was not an encountered risk.

Based on an examination of Internet personal advertisements, field observations, and formal semi-structured interviews, involvement with sex tourists is not condemned in St. Thomas, particularly for males, rather just the opposite. Storytelling plays a major role in the social status of locals and many males interviewed for this research spoke of hearing stories or told stories of their peers’ sexual involvement with tourists. Other sex tourism researchers have found such risks to be low given the tourism environment and culture of tolerance (de Albuquerque, 1998, 1999; Kempadoo, 2003; Weichselbaumer, 2012; Wonders and Michalowski, 2001). Herald, Garcia, and DeMoya (2001), de Albuquerque (1999), and Sharpe and Pinto (2006) have reported an increase in status for
males who have sex with female tourists. If the providers are female, the culture of
tolerance is likely to overpower any significantly negative social implication that being a
known sex provider would have (de Albuquerque, 1988; Herold, Garcia and DeMoya,
2001; Sharpe and Pinto, 2006). Compared to the mainland, sexuality is much more
displayed in St. Thomas. Due to a culture of tolerance, and given that enforcers of such
social norms are often involved in sex tourism as facilitators, this researcher found that
any negative stigma for involvement in the sex tourism industry was very low if it exists
at all.

If the risks mentioned above had presented, steps would have been taken to ensure
the safety and protection of the participants as best as possible. A cooperating local
mental health counseling resource was contacted in advance and asked to be available for
participant counseling, if needed. This mental health service has an office in St. Thomas.
The participants were also given an informed consent form waiver that explained their
rights as a participant, described what the research project was about, explained that their
participation was voluntary and anonymous, and reiterated that they could discontinue
participation at any time with no negative consequences. Contact information for Nova
Southeastern University’s Human Research Oversight Board, the dissertation Committee
Chair, and this researcher were also included, if the participant had any questions or
concerns about their involvement in this study. Additionally, pseudonyms were used
since the transcription of the first interview. To ensure the security of the collected data,
no interview notes were taken during the interview nor were informed consent forms
used. Instead, informed consent form waivers were provided to the participants. During
the study, this researcher lived in a gated property in St. Thomas with high security,
which ensured the safety and security of the data collection tools, e.g. computer and cell phone.

Privacy and emotional comfort for both the participant and the researcher were goals for each interview. For added security, the formal interviews were not recorded, nor were they held in settings that might have been uncomfortable for either the participant or the researcher. Five of the formal interviews took place at the beach, four were held at restaurants, and one in the cab of a taxi while sitting in a public parking lot. With each meeting, the space selected was agreed to be mutually comfortable for both the participant and researcher. Each participant was reminded that he or she could ask questions at any time during or after the interview, and that they could opt out of the research at any time. The safety and mental wellbeing of the researcher were also important. Several measures were in place to ensure these matters were adequately addressed. For physical security, solo evening observations were never conducted. Nor were hot spot locations for trouble selected, only locations known to be safe for tourists.

**Reflexivity**

Regarding the mental well being of the researcher, reflexivity was an important part of the entire research process. Willis (2007) discusses the importance of researchers having a support or interest group, whereby they can discuss thoughts, reflections, and ideas about the research with their support group. The process of reflecting ideas and thoughts with others can lead to an increase in insight, creativity, and perspectives that might not have otherwise been evident (Willis, 2007). Leedy and Ormrod (2005) suggest that researchers engage in reflexivity as a way to identify and challenge their own biases that may have influenced the research. Because this researcher had lived in St. Thomas previously and had a wide range of experiences among West Indian locals, state-
side locals, and tourists, this researcher had formed perspectives of life in St. Thomas that may have jaded this research. This researcher was fortunate to have had a core peer group to rely on for support during this research process to check these assumptions.

Besides this researcher’s own dissertation committee members, discussing concepts of human needs, for example, with peers from St. Thomas, the Caribbean, and the mainland provided this researcher with an awareness of the need to provide rich support for this perspective in a non-opposing objective manner. There were times when the researcher’s objectivity was called into question by two of the researcher’s peers, providing an opportunity to see different views. These moments offered a realization that more substantiation would be needed if the researcher’s efforts were to be considered valid. As a result, this researcher was very cognizant of her and others’ perspectives and the potential limitations of these perspectives. Additionally, this researcher was afforded a deeper understanding into the thought processes and worldviews of the research participants.

Limitations

There were several limitations of this research worth mentioning. One is the researcher’s gender. Because this researcher is female, while the majority of the interviewees were male, this researcher’s gender could have distorted the genuineness of any one of the participants’ stories. For example, several of the male interviewees offered their own sexual services to this researcher as a way to validate their stories. Since having numerous sexual relations is a source of social status, a concern was that some of their stories were embellished for the sake of the research. It is not the intention of this researcher to judge or filter the interviewees’ insights, merely to report what they say. However, since each interviewee separately shared similar stories, it is likely the
stories are not exaggerated. With regard to the females this researcher observed and interviewed, a female interviewer could have been cause for stress thinking that they would be judged or condemned by the researcher. The female strippers may have been under a watchful eye of a pimp or lover-boy and not permitted to speak with the interviewer. If any of the participants had not been comfortable being interviewed in person, they could have opted of a phone interview. Those interviewed for this research were eager to share their stories to the point that it did not seem that the researcher’s gender inhibited their responses.

A second limitation of this study could have been that the researcher is not originally from St. Thomas. But since many of the interviewees were not originally from St. Thomas either, this factor did not seem to be a significant one. This situation could have impeded rapport and trust. Regardless, this researcher focused on the commonalities she shared with the participants and by demonstrating her knowledge of the island and Caribbean history, current events, and understanding of island culture. Many of the interviewees seemed impressed with the researcher’s ‘island-ness’ during rapport building. Two participants asked the rhetorical question “what do you know about that” indicating that they were impressed with the researcher’s perspective on things they assumed only West Indians or St. Thomians could understand. Furthermore, all the interviewees questioned the ethnicity of this researcher, assuming she was biracial, Latina/Spanish, or even Brazilian, which may have aided rapport building. For these reasons, it seemed to the researcher that not being from St. Thomas was not a significant factor. Furthermore, through reflective listening and the use of clarifying questions, reservations about trust and misunderstanding were overcome.
Thirdly, credibility related to the formal semi-structured interviews have been limited in this research. Credibility, as referenced earlier in this section, is a validity characteristic that can assist with the transparency of a qualitative research (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). The goal to remain as transparent as possible not only helps “the researcher stay close to the data”, but also allows for the research itself to be replicated lending credence to the research’s findings (Rubin and Rubin, 2005, p. 77). Because the interviews were not digitally recorded nor were notes taken during the actual interview, it could be argued that transparency was lost and thus credibility compromised. Given the concern for anonymity, it was decided that it would be safer for the sex providers to remain anonymous; therefore, the interviews were not recorded. The risk of loss of credibility was deemed less than the risk for loss of anonymity. To minimize the risk of loss of credibility, this researcher made a point to type from memory notes of each interview immediately after each interview. Otherwise, the creditability of this research is considered high since the details of this research process have been thoroughly laid out in this dissertation.

And finally, a noteworthy point to make for this dissertation is the lack of social data and existence of outdated social data for St. Thomas specifically. For example, a U.S. census has been routinely conducted for the USVI that does provide some important information on the demographics of the territory. However, because of the small population of the U.S. Virgin Islands, the U.S. census data is modified so as not to identify any one particular person, family or household. The data used is from a ten percent representation of the total territory’s population, not a representation from each specific island (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Other social or demographic statistics either lump St. Thomas and/or the Virgin Islands in with the rest of the United States data or
exclude it entirely. Most Caribbean regional social research excludes the U.S. Virgin Islands.

With this in mind, data for the island of St. Thomas or for the territory as a whole is sometimes not available. This highlights the fact that despite its United States affiliation as a U.S. territory, the quality of life in the USVI is different than the United States. For example, assessing how this American territory ranks on the United Nation’s Human Development Index (HDI) would provide additional insight, but the USVI is not listed on this Index. The HDI measures the social and economic development of a nation by considering education, life expectancy, wealth, and standard of living. The results are expressed on a scale between 0 and 1 where 1 meets all standards (United Nations Development Programme, n.d.). Relative to geographic location, size, population, demography, and the Central Intelligence Agency’s (CIA) World Factbook (n.d.) values of fertility, life expectancy, literacy, and gross domestic product (GDP), the USVI is most comparable to the Eastern Caribbean island nation of Antigua and Barbuda. Antigua and Barbuda rate .76 on the HDI, and rank 67th out of 186 scored countries. Serbia, Malaysia, and Libya precede Antigua and Barbuda on the ranked list.

In summary, qualitative research that examines a case holistically using data triangulation is best for social science studies such as this examination of the presence of sex tourism in St. Thomas, USVI. Credibility and reliability are goals for such research so as to ensure transparency and accuracy. Steps have been taken in this research process to assure the highest level of transparency and accuracy by providing the observational behavior checklist and interview questionnaire, through member-checking, and by explaining the coding process. These efforts help guarantee that the data generated from this study are authentic and genuine, thereby confirming that sex tourism does in fact
exist in St. Thomas and is related to other social problems of the island, as will be explained further in the next chapter.
Chapter Four: Data Analysis

As Stake indicates, data analysis is an ongoing process that commences even during qualitative case study data collection (Stake, 1995). Because data is pulled from various sources at different times, it is analyzed at different rates and re-analyzed whenever new data are added, all in an effort to make sense of the case studied relative to the case problem (Stake, 1995). Analyzing coded data from the three sources used in this case study involved a process whereby the researcher examined notes, and information from each source for patterns and recurrent themes (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). This type of analysis style can either use a predetermined theory for structure or it can allow the data to reveal a unique theoretical structure, as in grounded theory research. The research herein made use of the structure that Human Needs theory offers. As Saldana (2009) notes, “thematic analysis involves a search for the relationships among domains and how they are linked to the culture as a whole” (p. 137). The thematic data analysis process was selected for this case study research.

Through the data analysis process, this research offers evidence that sex tourism does exist in St. Thomas, United States Virgin Islands and is indeed related to problematic social issues. A detailed description of the case has been offered in an attempt to portray the daily life in St. Thomas and the presence of a culture of tolerance that perpetuates sex tourism. Data collected from the internet, field observations, and formal semi-structured interviews framed around Human Needs theory offer an explanation as to why sex tourism exists, what problems are related to sex tourism, and how the problems can possibly be remedied.

It became obvious at the start of the data collection that pursuit of basic human needs was the prime motivator for those engaged in sex tourism. Needs which are only
achieved through interactions with the social world, like status, power, and identity seem to be particularly relevant in the case of St. Thomas (Maslow, 1943; Burton, 1998). Maslow (1943) describes these social needs as those that promote high evaluations of self from others. The fulfillment of esteem needs leads a person to feeling self-confident, worthy, and useful to the world (Maslow, 1943). The culture of the Caribbean, the Virgin Islands, and St. Thomas in particular places high value in saving and maintaining face, identity, and status, as do other high context cultures (Augsburger, 1992; Harrigan and Varlack, 1977). Ausburger (1992) surmises that the concept of face, as it relates to identity, is less important for Westerners of low context cultures than non-Westerners where self esteem or pride is synonymous with “the esteem of the other, affirmed and reflected regard, felt and recognized worth, and pride and social significance” (p. 84). Like face, Ritzer (2008) says that status is linked with lifestyle and is contingent upon social interaction. This concept resonates in the context of St. Thomas.

The cultural importance of social status reverberates across the Caribbean whereby the more ‘manly’ a male is the more secure is his social status (de Albuquerque, 1998; Kempadoo, 2009; Padilla, 2008; United Nations Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean, 1997). Manliness is demonstrated through numerous sexual relations with females. West Indian males who work on the front lines of tourism are perceived as the quintessential Caribbean males because their high profile work and lifestyle, involving frequent sexual relations, earning them great status (Ritzer, 2008). In sum, the number of sexual relations men have particularly with tourists is a demonstration of their manliness. All of the male sex providers’ interviewed or observed for this research have occupations that put them in direct contact with tourists, e.g. taxi driver, beach attendant, security guard, bartender, and hotel manager. Within
tourist/local relationships, Caribbean men are not only stereotyped into being hypersexual and desiring sex often, but seem to fulfill that expectation, or at least strive to (Bender and Furman, 2004; de Albuquerque 1998, 1999; Kempadoo, 2009).

Women on the other hand, are not expected to be as sexually active as their male counterparts. Though males, tourists and locals alike, objectify women sexually, women are not expected to publicly demonstrate their own sexuality, and, if they do, there are negative social repercussions. Status for women is not earned through multiple sexual relations with tourists, like it is for men. This is because of a traditional Caribbean cultural bias that favors males over females; a bias that is further exacerbated by the tourism industry.

**Analyzed Internet Data**

Considered a facilitating device, the Internet is used extensively to advertise individuals available for sex, sex tours, and resorts and hotels that permit sex tourism, perpetuating a tolerance for sexual exploitation, sex trafficking, and gender biases (Jones and Jemott, 2009). With the same effort it takes to book a flight online, a sex tourist can view sexual images, communicate with other sex tourists, and find information on the availability of sex in the tourist destination (Bacon 2007). ‘Tourists’ can search online for everything they need to know about having sex on vacation before leaving their home (Bacon, 2007). Sex tourism researcher Eades (2009) identified the Internet as a significant factor in the rise of sex tourism and is the major reason why it has become a global industry. The U.S. Department of Justice website also recognizes the role the Internet plays in sex tourism: “The Internet has also facilitated the recent rise in … sex tourism by providing a convenient marketing channel” (2010). Shared Hope International, which studied sex tourism extensively in four different locations around the
world, identified relationships among the internet, pornography, and the commercial sex industry: “Recent technologies have also contributed greatly to the proliferation of pornography. The viewing of adult pornography by situational or opportunistic buyers is a primary gateway to the purchase of humans for commercial sex” (p. 5, 2007). Not only does this study find pornography as a catalyst for sex tourism, but it also finds that it feeds misogynic attitudes. A study on Internet pornography found that there is a direct tie between viewing sexually explicit images online with “sex abuse, violence against women and human trafficking” (Hughes, 2014). Of this study’s analysis of 304 pornographic scenes, “88.2% contained physical aggression, principally spanking, gagging, and slapping, while 48.7% of scenes contained verbal aggression, primarily name-calling. Perpetrators of aggression were usually male, whereas targets of aggression were overwhelmingly female” (Hughes, 2014). It is no wonder then that sex tourism is related to gender based violence and sexism.

To examine whether or not the Internet influences sex tourism in St. Thomas, this researcher conducted Internet searches using the words sex, sex tourism, prostitution, hookers, strip clubs, and escort with St. Thomas or the Virgin Islands. The results identified several websites that list St. Thomas or the Virgin Islands as one of the many Caribbean sex tourist destinations. The top seven most recurring Internet sites for sex tourism in the Caribbean that included St. Thomas and/or the Virgin Islands were found to be CityXGuide.com, Worldsexguide.com, Wikisexguide.com, Sexcation-review.com, Globalgayz.com, Procon.org, and Craigslist.com. The target audience for these sites is English-speaking males traveling to the Caribbean looking for strip clubs, brothels, and sex for hire.
Some Caribbean destinations, like the Dominican Republic, have Internet advertisements and websites that boast local females for hire as escorts, resorts with sex tourism themes, and local females available as mail-order brides (Pope, 2005; Ryan and Hall, 2001; Seabrook, 2001). Cuban vacation websites promote all-inclusive packages highlighting opportunities for visiting Western European, North American, Latin American and Asian males to have sex with exotic and inexpensive locals (Pope, 2005). The online sex industry in St. Thomas is not as blatant. However, the sites mentioned above do openly discuss the commercial sex industry in St. Thomas specifically in discussion forums and blog formats.

Some of the themes that this researcher identified from the analysis of these Internet sites include liminality, accessibility, acceptance/tolerance, gender biases and exploitation as well as anonymity for behaviors that would otherwise be morally frowned upon in tourist source countries. Most of these sites comment on the strip clubs and brothels. The men’s reviews describe the working females as ‘girls’ and as numbers based on a scale of one to ten where a rating of a ten signifies the most beautiful female sex worker. One tourist’s review of a strip club worker in downtown Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, states, “She looked okay, probably a 6 or even 7 on a tough day, and I was tired, so I went with it, it was $60 for as much as you could get in in [sic] a half hour…” (Worldsexguide.com, 2004). These discussion forums also provide price ranges for various sexual services including prices for ‘full service’ (sexual intercourse), revealing that sex tourism via prostitution does take place in St. Thomas.

A search of CityXGuide.com found one male tourist’s post of his experiences in St. Thomas. His post was in response to a future male tourist’s inquiry about where to go for sex in St. Thomas thus, “At "El Cubano" they charge $30 to $40 USD and "The
Tank” they asked $40-$50. You get about a half hour for this, but the girls do take some pride in their work and will get you off even it it [sic] takes longer…The girls provide condoms”. Another post references two male tourists’ experiences at another St. Thomas brothel, “… paid $200 each for several hours of pleasure. Both girls were early 20's, pleasant, and had nice bodies. One of them spoke decent English which helped. We even rotated our women and had a great time. Good luck.” These posts make it clear that the tourists were discussing their experiences of transactional sex with women imported to the island.

The website ProCon.org (2013) describes the legalities and level of enforcement against prostitution in numerous countries around the world. This website also identifies the link between prostitution, sex trafficking, and sex tourism. Reading descriptions like the one below, it is clear that there is a global culture of tolerance for the sex tourism industry. For example, since the U.S. Virgin Islands did not make the list but Antigua and Barbuda (the most comparable island nation to the USVI) did, the following is this website’s description for this island nation:

Prostitution is prohibited, but remains a problem…There are no laws that specifically address trafficking in persons and there were occasional reports of trafficking in women to the country. There were numerous brothels, which were staffed mostly by women from various Caribbean countries who traveled to the country as ‘entertainers’ or ‘dancers’. In some cases brothel owners reportedly retained their documents to exert influence over the victims… There were two known cases during the year in which persons were trafficked to the country to work in local brothels… In neither case were charges brought against the brothel owners.
Like Antigua and Barbuda, the USVI has criminalized prostitution. And yet, like Antigua and Barbuda, prostitution in the USVI exists and is a serious social problem because it involves human trafficking (Bussard, 2008; Ellis, 2013; Norris, 2013a).

The VINow.com website shows a 2004 conversation thread based on the question of whether or not is prostitution legal in St. Thomas: “Even though it is technically illegal, it is commonly accepted at several places here”. Another comment made by a tourist who calls himself ‘TravelGuy’ stated, “Here’s the scoop. It’s illegal here, but the cops pretty much don’t give a crap. It’s paradise! Oh yeah, you can drive around with a beer or cocktail in your hand too, pretty cool.” The website WorldSexGuide.com includes posts from male tourists who have visited several St. Thomas strip clubs. These posts offer recommendations on when to arrive at the strip clubs, how much the going rate is for ‘full service’ and where to find the most attractive female sex providers. Collectively, these comments offer supporting evidence of a culture of tolerance in St. Thomas for not only drinking and driving, but also prostitution, the commodification of females, gender biased attitudes and behaviors, and sex tourism.

The conflict involved with Internet related sex tourism is that it is exploitative and aids in the repeated victimization of females. Every time a post is made regarding where to go for commercial sex, a female forced into that industry through trafficking is re-victimized. Another way the Internet causes conflict is through the use of deceptive job advertisements intentionally designed to lure females into the sex industry. For example, women looking for a better work opportunity may eagerly apply for a job such as the one described below not realizing the nature of the work. This benign appearing job announcement was posted on the strip club ‘Tootsy’s’ Facebook:
This is a working vacation. Enjoy this bustling destination by day, and at night dance the night away with our affluent clientele in our brand new upscale Gentlemen's Night Club, Tootsy’s. We provide discounted hotel, transportation to/from work, and the most beautiful beaches you'll ever frolic in! We are especially interested in beautiful, fit, polished & well-mannered entertainers.

The reality of this type of work is quite different. In April, 2014, this alert (photograph not included) was posted to Tootsy’s Facebook page regarding a missing fourteen year old girl, insinuating that the girl was a stripper at Tootsy’s: “This is also what happens to some of TOOTSY’S Gentlemen's club dancers. They simply just go missing… one day in the next no body knows…”. As to the owner of this strip club, this posting also appeared on the strip club’s Facebook page, “Toni A. Jamil the owner, like to fuck all the girls that works for him. He'll start of by buying you things then wanting sex for the gifts.” The posted online reviews of the strip clubs in St. Thomas by tourists, these Facebook comments, what Lewis, co-director of Women’s Coalition in St. Croix has found, and what this researcher has personally witnessed collectively resonate with what other Caribbean sex tourism researchers have found; that the women working in brothels and strip clubs are not working in the commercial sex industry by choice (Sexcation Review, 2014; Wikisexguide, 2014; World Sex Guide, 2007).

Of all the reports on sex tourism that discuss the Internet’s role as a facilitator, one website was often mentioned by name, Craigslist.com, perhaps because it is available worldwide, even in tiny remote places in St. Thomas. Shared Hope International (2007) and Cook County Sheriff’s office have identified volumes of cases where Craigslist was directly involved in the sale and trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation.
and commercial gain. Kunze (2010) discusses Craigslist’s role in human trafficking and the sexual exploitation of women and children within the context of a need for laws that protect vulnerable groups even online. Ken Franzblau, anti-trafficking campaign coordinator for Equity Now has recognized the salacious role Craigslist specifically plays in the exploitation of the vulnerable “Users of the online classifieds sites like Craigslist can log on and find listings for young prostitutes alongside numerous other items for sale… Craigslist is becoming America’s biggest pimp…” (Bacon, 2007, p.2). Despite lawsuits against it in the United States, (Chicago Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under the Law v. Craigslist, 2006; Cook County Sheriffs Department v. Craigslist, 2009) Craigslist is still legally able to operate as a sex tourism facilitator, protected by the Communications Decency Act (Gohring, 2009; Kunze, 2010). Craigslist’s motive to protect its personal section is financial. In 2006 Craigslist earned an estimated $80 million in annual profits from its ‘erotic services section’ (Kunze, 2010). In 2010, it was estimated to have earned $122 million in revenues from its personals section (Van Grove, 2010). A portion of that profit undoubtedly came from two women who published a letter directed at Craigslist’s founder in the Washington Post pleading with him to shut down the Personals section of Craigslist because of how it is used as a tool for the repeated sale, rape, and trafficking of females (McGreal, 2010). One part of the letter stated,

All day, me and other girls sat with our laptops, pasting pictures and answering ads on Craigslist, [my trafficker] made $1,500 a night selling my body, dragging me to Los Angeles, Houston, Little Rock- and one trip to Las Vegas in the trunk of a car. (McGreal, 2010)
In reaction to this letter, Richard Blumenthal, Attorney General for Connecticut, also urged Craigslist to shut down all its adult classifieds section because of its link to prostitution and human trafficking, though unsuccessfully (Musil, 2010).

For reasons related to their frequent mentioning, this researcher chose to also examine sex for hire websites, dating websites, and Craigslist in St. Thomas for sex tourism related activities. As already mentioned, the Internet is involved in the sex tourism industry, and websites featuring personals sections like Craigslist have been found to be facilitators. This researcher explored the possibility of other sites used in St. Thomas for sex tourism and found there were no other sites used for tourist/local sexual connections. Websites that may be popular in the United States did not seem to be functional in St. Thomas due to its small geographical size. Specifically, Connectingsingles.com, a dating website, does not recognize St. Thomas’s zip code as a search area for singles. Stthomas.date.com, another dating website, requires payment to communicate with other local website members. Sexbook.com and Adultfriendfinder.com are essentially the same sex sites that feature the same user profiles on both, use the same webpage format, and also require payment to communicate with other members. Mingle2.com does not seem to be a valid site for St. Thomas, probably due to its small size, because it pulls profiles from all over the world, making it seem like there are numerous available people in the Virgin Islands when there are not. The profile postings show people from Dallas, USVI; Lagos, USVI; and Cairns, USVI leading this researcher to question the validity of this website because no such locations in the USVI exist with these names. Datehookup.com and Backpage.com are free and appear to be used in St. Thomas, but only by locals; and since login times are posted for each user, it is obvious that locals hardly use this site. Furthermore, a search for females
interested in male on Backpage.com reveals no results, only female profiles appear indicating that this is not a site used by any females, tourist or local. Another source of tourist/local sex connections could be via the local newspaper. But the Virgin Island Daily News comes from Scranton, Pennsylvania, featuring an average of only two pages of local news and no personals section.

Once this researcher ruled out the other websites for their lack of involvement in sex tourism, only Craigslist was left. Knowing how prevalent Craigslist is used in St. Thomas for other shopping needs and because other Internet sources for sex in St. Thomas have been found to be limited, this researcher considered Craigslist to be a likely source for sex tourism, and it is. The findings of the Craigslist research revealed several themes like liminality, risk taking, socially deviant sexual behavior (particularly homosexuality), and acceptance/tolerance (or lack of) for certain sexually biased behaviors. The following is an analysis of six months of tourist/local specific Craigslist personal advertisements in St. Thomas.

To fully understand these advertisements, an explanation of the Internet lingo is needed. Internet vernaculars have evolved around the advertisements for the sale and purchase of online commodities, particular illegal commodities like sex. Two recent St. Thomas advertisements below demonstrate the subtle, yet obvious, requests for both the supply of and demand for commercial sex with females. The first post’s indicator is the use of the word ‘generous’ indicating that the uninhibited fun being offered is sexual and for a fee. The second post uses the dollar symbol indicating that the person seeking sex is willing to pay:

10/17/13
Slender Woman for Visitors - w4m - 48 (St Thomas)
Are you visiting, have a hotel room or villa to play in?
Slender local woman looking for generous guys or couples for uninhibited fun.
Just trying to make ends meet and have some fun.

8/6/14

**Lets tangle - m4w (STT)**

Looking for some company to hang out with and blow off load. In shape male looking for the same. Tonight or when your free $ fun must be had.

Craigslist personal advertisements involving sex with local females often include monetary references. Though because these ads do not specifically state a request for tourists, they were not included in the formal analysis of the Craigslist advertisements. Other St. Thomas Craigslist personal advertisements that do not mention transactional sex include local males or couples, current tourists, and future tourists. Most of these postings are of some type of homosexual interest. It is common to read tourists’ posts on Craigslist advertising their vacation dates, where they are staying, and what kind of sexual relationship they seek while in St. Thomas. For example, this advertisement was posted May 22, 2014:

**JUNE 13TH CRUISE SHIP VISITOR - m4m (ST THOMAS)**

ED HERE GONNA be in for day off cruise ship...would luv to get naaked and play..luv cock and more 235 good guy sixty four passinate Italian

Because this advertisement was posted on May 22, 2014, the post indicates a future male cruise ship tourist seeking a sexual encounter with a local male on the day of his arrival. Any local male interested in accommodating ‘Ed’ would reply to this Craigslist advertisement.

The Craigslist data consistently showed homosexual interest of future or current tourists to be the highest tallying categories of tourist related personal advertisements, with ‘man for man’ (m4m) interest representing most of the homosexual posting, indicating more male tourists seek non-traditional sexual relations while on vacation through Craigslist than female tourists (Figure 3 and Figure 4). This dynamic speaks to
Ryan and Kinder’s (1996) description of tourists’ liminal sexual behaviors. Perhaps liminal phases, like vacations, are the only times sexually repressed people feel they can live their true sexual identities. Some homosexual tourists who feel pressured to live heterosexually may feel they can temporarily live their true identities while on vacation knowing the heterosexual social statuses they have established in their home locations will not be compromised.

Kempadoo (1999), and Padilla and Castellanos (2008) acknowledge the great prevalence of gay/homosexual sex tourism throughout the Caribbean, particularly during Carnival times (Padilla, 2008). Of all the July 2012 tourist related personal ads posted on Craigslist, over half were seeking male homosexual relations (Figure 4). Incidentally, July is St. John’s Carnival month. Because there is no direct way to get to St. John other than through St. Thomas, and because of its close proximity to St. Thomas (2.5 miles), many people celebrating St. John’s Carnival stay in St. Thomas. December was the only month examined that showed more heterosexual ‘man for woman’ interest than homosexual interest. The low number of Craigslist postings for December may be due to the holiday season, a time when there is a high presence of families traveling to St. Thomas with children (Figure 2).
Figure 2.

Figure 3.
There are some limitations to the Craigslist analysis. For instance, there is no way to verify who is placing personal ads on Craigslist. Though this researcher may have categorized the ads as ‘local’ or ‘homosexual’ there is no way to verify the accuracy of these categorizations. Another limitation is that one person can post multiple ads. The number of ads analyzed for this research is not necessarily equivalent to the number of people looking for sex. Finally, some postings were not included because they could not be easily categorized. It was not clear based on the ad if the person was a local, a tourist, or a future tourist, nor was it clear for some postings for whom the person was searching. However, despite these limitations, this data does reveal an Internet based sex tourism activity in St. Thomas. The extent that this behavior occurs and the residual effects it has on the host and visiting populations have yet to be determined.

**Internet Themes and Theory**

As previously mentioned, the examination of the St. Thomas Craigslist data collected for this research revealed several prominent themes. The most obvious theme was that most postings were of some type of morally opposing sexual relationship, and of

![Heterosexual vs Homosexual Ads](image-url)
those postings most showed some type of homosexual interest. Unlike heterosexual female-based postings, these homosexual male-based postings did not allude to a financial element for sex. This disparity is perhaps because males cannot be subjugated and commodified within a male dominant society, like females can.

The homosexual theme of Craigslist postings may be fulfilling identity needs for those who feel they cannot otherwise express their true sexuality because of a homophobic culture. GlobalGays.com, a website that includes descriptions of the LGTB (lesbian, gay, transgender, and bisexual) life in vacation destinations, offers an article on the LGTB life in the U.S. Virgin Islands with a section called ‘life on the down low’ describing the extent of the homophobic culture of the territory:

For ‘down low’ men (and women) in the homophobic Afro-Caribbean population in the Virgin Islands it is a way of life for survival’s sake as well as a way to find authentic pleasure (and love) while avoiding exposure and public shame. These folks are virtually invisible and very private. No one is going to reveal himself willingly; it’s secretive and plays on the edge of duplicity, deception and betrayal. It is emotionally stressful and is one of the worst consequences of the disease homophobia. A gay or lesbian tourist who happens to trick with a ‘down low’ husband (or wife) is not likely to know the truth about their Mr/Ms Right-now. (Ammon, 2012)

This excerpt not only offers validation that even gay sex tourism exists in St. Thomas, but it also provides an indication as to why websites like Craigslist predominantly feature homosexual requests. The anonymity that the Internet offers is undoubtedly appealing for sex providers with alternative sexual interests. Beech (2011) and Grandoit (2005)
mention how liminal practices, e.g. sex tourism, help to reconstruct personal identities. To this point Doring (2009) states, “individuals with non-mainstream sexual orientations or preferences, who have difficulty finding likeminded persons, are able to easily and inexpensively locate each other on the internet” thereby providing a sense of belonging for otherwise ostracized individuals (p. 1091).

There is a hazard to this behavior as referenced in Ammon’s 2012 quote. The most serious element of this quest for identity is that it involves clandestine sexual behavior, which undoubtedly contributes to the rising STD rates in St. Thomas:

Because of the cultural taboos in openly admitting to or discussing homosexuality and the practice of men having sex with men, this population is clearly a significant risk group for the transmission of HIV/AIDS, both among themselves and to the women they may be involved with [sic]. (Virgin Islands Health Topics, 2008).

It was clear that there is a recognition as to the risks involved with ‘down low’ sex, because nearly all Craigslist homosexual advertisements specifically stated a requests for ‘clean’ or ‘disease free’ partners.

**Internet Culture of Tolerance**

The commodification of females in St. Thomas online is an Internet theme that also speaks to the culture of tolerance. The blatancy of this trend seems to be exclusively related to females. In strip club reviews, females are described as ‘girls’ and numbers in what this researcher views as attempts to dehumanize the women in the commercial sex industry. The culture of tolerance for the commodification of females is demonstrated online through the Internet when it is used as to facilitator others searching for females to sexually exploit. Furthermore, that so many locations can be identified on line as having
active commercial sex tourism industries despite the illegalities of it, exhibits the breadth of this tolerance for the sexual exploitation of females.

All the Internet data, including the Craigslist data, demonstrate a high demand for sexual gratification outside of having emotionally connected relationships. This demand for ‘nsa’ or casual sex is so high that websites, discussion forums, blogs, and personal advertisement sections exist exclusively for this purpose. Whether for heterosexual or homosexual relations, this demand is primarily male driven. This researcher found no presence of websites catering to female tourists looking for sex with local males, or blogs about vacationing females discussing their sexual relations with local males. The absence of such data involving female tourists demonstrates the gender divide within the tourism industry. It is clear that males gain social status through storytelling about their sexual experiences, even if the story telling is online.

**Analyzed Field Observations**

Field observations provide social researchers with intrinsic information about the case being studied. Watching quotidian social interactions, reading local newspapers, overhearing conversations, and talking directly with people can provide a feel for the pulse of a studied case. De Albuquerque (1998, 1999) relied heavily on field observations during his time living in Barbados and Jamaica for his sex tourism research. His methodology for data collection included frequenting bars and beaches, watching for tourist/local interactions, eavesdropping, lurking, befriending key respondents e.g. beach boys, hotel managers, security guards, and holding conversations about the sexual activities among these groups. Frohlick’s (2008) sex tourism research from Costa Rica involved her living in the area for seven months so she could gain better insight into the local life through observations of and participation in the daily life. She admits that much
of her data came from gossip and informally held interviews. Jacobs (2009), another sex tourism researcher, was considered by locals a part time resident of the Mount Sinai region of Egypt during her study. This position allowed her to gain access and build rapport with tourists at resorts while also allowing her to build rapport with local men for formal interviewing. Sex tourism researchers Herald, Garcia, and DeMoya (2001), set up at a beach resort on the north side of the Dominican Republic. There they formally interviewed male beach workers, and male and female sex tourists. They also surveyed female sex workers and utilized a focus group of several men from the beach worker group. From these data collection methods, the researchers gained significant insight into the sex tourism industry of the Dominican Republic. Kempadoo’s 2001 article stems from data collected from listening, observing, interviewing, and interacting with the men and women who worked in the commercial sex industry in eight different Caribbean nations. Her research also included focus groups.

Like many of these researchers, this researcher too lived in the area studied so as to gain greater insight into the life of the case. Though this researcher lived in St. Thomas before from 2006-2008, she moved back to the island in 2011 and lived there till 2013 for the purpose of academic research relating to this study. By living in a place being studied, daily life becomes the field for observations. This researcher employed several of the same strategies as the other sex tourism researchers mentioned above. This researcher observed behaviors, overheard conversations, conducted formal interviews, and engaged in informal conversations. Themes like gender bias, acceptance/intolerance, and liminality were identified during this data collection process, as were new themes like risk, social status, islandness/blackness, and competition. One beach in particular, Coki beach, was often the site where many of these strategies were used.
Coki beach is a popular tourist destination in St. Thomas because it features a small marine aquarium, water sports rentals, food and drink services, and public facilities. It is situated on the coast of a very poor section of St. Thomas. This section, called Smith Bay, is also the location of one of the brothels mentioned above, El Cubano, and is an area familiar with violent crimes. The majority of the beach workers at Coki are West Indian males, though there are several West Indian female workers. There were also two local male state-siders (one younger and white, the other older and black), and one local black male worker originally from Senegal. Unlike many of the other beach locations, Coki beach is not affiliated with a resort. Like all the beaches in St. Thomas, Coki beach is public. And since it is not a resort-affiliated beach, it is not gated. And unlike Magen’s Bay beach, a fee is not required to gain beach access or to park. For these reasons, it is a popular beach for many locals, particularly local males, who congregate to drink, smoke (marijuana), chat, listen to music, and watch tourists.

Other beach locations this researcher visited were found to have a low level of local/tourist interactions, though some fruitful conversations did come from the workers. Emerald beach, next to the airport, accommodates two resorts and does see a mix of tourists and locals, though during the few times observed, it seemed as if there was a distinct separation between tourists at one end of the beach and locals at the other end with little overlapping. It was at one of these resorts at Emerald beach that this researcher met and spoke with Marlene, a front desk worker, about her perspective of sex tourism at her resort and in St. Thomas in general. Another beach, on the East end of the island, though also public, is accessed through the resort’s guarded gate. There are some beach workers, but all are originally from the United States. Few locals are found at this beach because of enforcement by the guards to keep locals away from the tourists. This is the
site where this researcher met Shiquan, a security guard formally interviewed. Magen’s Bay is the longest beach in St. Thomas and is a popular tourist destination. But because a fee is required upon entrance, many locals do not frequent this beach either. This researcher did meet and have casual conversations with Duncan, a lifeguard and acquaintance of this researcher, and Swanson, a taxi driver, at Magens Bay one quiet rainy day. Another South side resort beach was a location of interest. The beach workers at this beach are staff of the resort, except for the workers who operate the jet ski kiosk at the far end of the beach. The father of one of the two workers this researcher formally interviewed (Gary and Donald) owns this kiosk. This researcher knows the kiosk owner from the time this researcher worked at this resort the first time she lived in St. Thomas. Bolongo Bay beach is affiliated with Bolongo Resort, but this beach is very small and very rocky, not conducive to swimming. This researcher has found very few tourists on the beach at this resort, and subsequently very few locals. There is however a water sports worker who offered insight into sex tourism as a beach worker during a casually held conversation. Hoping to find a former co-worker for a formal interview who was rumored to be working the high end resort on St. Thomas, this researcher went to this resort, also on the East end of the island. Not finding this former co-worker, this researcher instead met and casually conversed with Chavez, a long time bartender at this resort’s beach side restaurant, during quiet moments at the bar. He too offered valuable information, particularly on the power dynamics that played out within tourism.

During evening observation, this researcher often positioned herself at one of two primary tourist destinations, Red Hook and Havensight. Red Hook, on the East end of the island features the ferry dock connecting St. Thomas and St. John, a marina, several shops and business, and many restaurants and bars within walking distance of each other.
Duffy’s Love Shack, a parking lot bar/restaurant by day and dance club at night, is situated in the heart of Red Hook, and was the site most evening observations took place, especially on Wednesday nights because women are able to drink alcohol for free. This specific feature makes Duffy’s a popular site for local/tourist interactions. Red Hook is also the area where Tootsy’s is located, the tourist targeted strip club. It is at this club that this researcher met and casually conversed with several female strippers.

Havensight is another area of shops, bars and restaurants within walking distance of each other located around the Charlotte Amalie harbor. This area also comprises the high end shopping district and the mega-yacht dock during high season. There is one nightclub in the area that tourists, docked yacht workers, and locals are known to attend called Starz. This nightclub is indoor and therefore air-conditioned, features a VIP section upstairs, has slot machines and a roulette table, and has a separate bar away from the nightclub side. Unlike Duffy’s, which plays music from a computer’s playlist and requires no entrance fee, Starz’s hires a disc jockey and requires all its patrons to pay an entrance fee. Starz also does not feature a ‘Lady’s Night’. Several nights of observations took place at Starz.

Daytime field observations at Coki beach revealed beach workers’ approach tactics strikingly similar to what other sex tourism researchers have reported in their studies (de Albuquerque, 1999; Herold, Garcia, and DeMoya, 2001). Like Herold and associates (2001) who stated that most of the time the beach workers make the first approach, this research noticed the same. The first half dozen or so times of arriving at this beach’s parking lot, until this researcher became recognized as a local, this researcher was approached by a beach workers offering to assist with renting snorkels and beach chairs, or with anything else this researcher might need, an approach tactic used on other
arriving beach guests. Few of the beach workers wore sunglasses. That they did not
made it obvious when the beach workers established and maintained eye contact with the
tourists, another tactic Herold and associates (2001) noticed.

Flattery and a non-threatening communication help build trust between the beach
worker and the tourist, stated Herold, Garcia, and DeMoya (2001). This researcher
overheard the male beach workers of St. Thomas using non-threatening communication
and flattery with tourists saying things to female tourists like, ‘You are looking beautiful
today’, ‘Hello beautiful. Can I help you find a beach chair’, or ‘Welcome to Coki beach,
would you and your husband or boyfriend like a beach chair?’ even if the women were
not seen with men. This latter approach not only let the beach workers know if the
women were accompanied by men, but also let them know the friendliness of the female
tourists (or lack of). De Albuquerque (1999) reported hearing beach workers say things
like “Is this your first visit to Barbados? Do you have a boyfriend or husband who is here
with you?” If the conversation seems to be going well, the beach worker might ask “
Have you ever had sex with a black man?” Pruitt and Lafont (1993) describe Jamaican
men’s approach to female tourists as being laced with “ardent declarations of love,
praises of love, and the like” (p. 427). Other local males who congregate at this beach
sometimes catcall to female tourists to get their attention, hoping to start a conversation.
Initiating conversation with tourists is also an opportunity for the tourists to hear the
beach workers’ accents, an appeal for many tourists. For the West Indian males, playing
up their ‘islandness’ or ‘blackness’ is a significant identity and status factor since many
female tourists are said to seek having sex with them specifically because they are
‘black’, ‘Caribbean’, or ‘island’. If a handshake accompanied the greeting, the beach
workers usually hold the female tourists’ hands for a longer than normal period and
would sometimes use a finger to ‘tickle’ the tourists’ palms, a gesture laden with sexual innuendos. The Western/tourists’ perception of abrupt or forward approaches of some beach workers no doubt had to do with the liminality of the tourists. If the tourists were cruise ship guests, the antics seemed to be more aggressive or persistent than if the tourists were staying for a longer period because cruise ship guests only stay for a few hours.

Coki beach is also where local males have been observed demonstrating their physical strength and social power by carrying stacks of beach chairs or barking commands at other, clearly subordinate, workers. Some men would use their jet skis or boats to perform fast eye-catching tricks in front of the beach area. Others would just walk around the beach area casually with either no shirt on or a tank top, revealing their muscular physic. The tactics used to attract female tourists’ attention in St. Thomas are similar to what Herold and associates (2001) and de Albuquerque (1998) found in their respective Dominican Republican and Jamaican sex tourism research locations. There the beach boys would play volleyball, water ski, or perform some other physical skills while wearing very little to attract tourists (De Albuquerque, 1999; Herold, Garcia, and DeMoya, 2001). Similar staging antics were witnessed during evening observations.

During field research at the night clubs, this researcher often noticed white female tourists dancing in groups (often times bachelorette party, or birthday party groups) while local black men either danced near by on their own or stood nearby waiting for a chance to make an initial move on one of the women, usually the most uninhibited ones. In general tourists, who are most often white, were identified by their overly formal dress, hairstyles, type of shoes, and red hue to their skin. White locals, in general, dress more casually, don less formal hairstyles, and are not sunburned.
Once engaged with a woman on the dance floor, the most common style of dance is notoriously known as wining, which includes what de Albuquerque describes as a “crotch-to-crotch pantomime”. This dance would be performed to the rhythm of soca or reggae songs (1998, p. 54). Herold, Garcia, and DeMoya (2001) also noticed tourists engaging in dance styles that involved physical contact with locals, primarily the Meringue. Like the non-threatening conversations held on the beach, these researchers viewed this dance scene as part of the seduction process that led to sexual relations between the local men and female tourists.

Other data collected from field observations pointed to more of the reasons why sex exists in St. Thomas and the culture of tolerance for it. This data has come from sources other than direct observations of tourist/local interactions. Understanding that sex tourism research in other Caribbean nations has found those locations to be very patriarchal, high-context, and gender biased drove this researcher to examine St. Thomas’s culture for similar cultural traits (Herold, Garcia, and DeMoya, 2001; Jones and Jemmott, 2009; Kempadoo, 2009; Sanchez Taylor, 2001). For example, evidence that the Virgin Islands is a male-dominated high-context society, where social status and identity for men are assessed and scrutinized by their peers based on, in large part, displays of gendered behavior, (specifically heterosexuality) did not come from one day of observation. Rather, living and experiencing daily life identified these occurrences as patterned cultural norms over time. Occasionally, however, specific instances have come to light exemplifying these nuanced cultural norms. A case in point demonstrating how pervasive gender-biased violence is in St. Thomas follows. While observing at Coki beach one day, this researcher personally heard a police officer threaten to beat a woman because the officer said she disrespected him in front of others. Actively searching for
this woman, this police officer stated that because he was going to beat her, he needed to call for back up assistance. This scene demonstrated several things: 1) the importance respect and saving face has in this culture 2) an acceptance for not only violence in general, but violence against women specifically, and 3) an ambivalence to the fact that this researcher heard his threat. That the police officer did not know if this researcher was a local or a tourist did not hinder his rage or filter his speech.

This researcher found another demonstration of the importance of face saving recently while reading a Virgin Islands Daily News newspaper article. A female stripper in St. Croix stabbed the strip club owner because she said he disrespected her (Stokes, 2104). More to this point, another Virgin Islands newspaper article identified revenge as the number one reason for murders in the territory. The unhealthy perspective of what respect is in the Virgin Islands is evident by the fact that violence is often the response when someone feels disrespected (Kossler, 2014; Mattei, 2013). Collectively, these instances highlight a cultural norming of violence when one’s status is challenged.

Sex tourism researchers have found that male dominated cultures that have a high tolerance for sex tourism are also cultures found to tolerate physical and sexual violence against females in male dominated societies (Jones and Jemmott, 2009, Kempadoo, 1999, 2009; Sanchez Taylor, 2001; UNICEF, 2002). This trend has also been found to be true in St. Thomas as evidenced by several reports and news articles. The territory’s first study examining intimate partner violence found that 40 percent of Virgin Island women reported having had experienced domestic violence (Morris, 2013b) compared with the national average of 25 percent (National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2007). Due to a fear of reporting and a lack of trust in the police, the actual percentage of intimate partner violence more than likely much higher. The reasons for domestic
violence are believed to stem from the abuser not feeling in control in other aspects of life and feeling disrespected. Additionally, Kossler’s 2014 newspaper report on the murder trends of the territory reflects a high percentage of crimes against females. Domestic violence has claimed the lives of at least a third of all murdered females in the territory (Kossler, 2014). More evidence of gender-based violence comes from an article on former Governor Turnbull’s 37 reduced sentences, pardons and commuted sentences. Nearly a quarter of these commutations were related to violent crimes against females, The insensitivity behind these commutations essentially re-victimized the females involved in these original crimes and threatens the lives of any other females with whom the men would become involved (Pancham, 2007).

Norris’s 2013 Virgin Island Daily News article titled Modern-Day Slavery connects the physical and sexual abuses of females to trafficking and the commercial sex industry. This article discussed a conference held in St. Thomas to discuss the extent of and issues related to sex trafficking, prostitution, and domestic violence occurring in the territory. Sex tourism researcher Kempadoo (2009) found that cultures where males who abuse females, sexually and physical because of their economic dependency are dysfunctional, and reveal unhealthy social systems and perspectives of power. A 2002 UNICEF report states, “In the Caribbean, gender inequalities, social norms, patriarchal values, domestic violence, and the economic dependency of women influence the rates of … sex abuse” (UNICEF, 2002). This article goes on to say that nearly half of all young women (47.6 percent) and nearly a third (31.9 percent) of all young men of a Caribbean World Health Organization study claimed that their first sexual experiences were forced by family members or friends of the family (UNICEF, 2002). Of girls 12 years old and younger, over forty percent had forced sexual experiences as their first sexual experience
(UNICEF, 2002). Because the perpetrators are known by the victims and often times other family members, the sexual abuse is rarely reported to police for reasons that include a lack of trust in authorities, shame and embarrassment, and fear of retaliation from the abuser (Jones and Jemmott, 2009; UNICEF, 2002).

During the course of this research on sex tourism in St. Thomas, it was learned from several sources, including a medical doctor, that this type of sex abuse is also customary within some populations in St. Thomas. It is believed by some cultures in St. Thomas that a young girl’s first sexual experience must be with the male head of house regardless of whether that male is a boyfriend, father, or other relative or friend (personal communication, 2013). Counseling psychologist Barrington Brennen (1999), who has practiced in the Bahamas and Jamaica had similar findings. He states “Incest has become an unspoken cultural tradition. In the Bahamas and the Caribbean, incest is very common. In some family cultures, a daughter having sex with dad is treated as a requirement and introduction to the real world of adult life” (p.1). The Virgin Islands Police Commissioner, Thomas Hannan confirmed the prevalence of this practice in a newspaper article when he said he was aware of a pattern in the community of sexually assaulting minors and a mentality of acceptance about it (Ellis, 2013).

It is understood that early sexual initiation in the Caribbean region is due to this practice of forcing young girls into having sex with the household father figure, which is also a contributing factor to entry into the commercial sex industry. The fact that the typical age of entry into prostitution is twelve to fourteen years old means that these children are being forced into the industry (Burch, 2011; Norris, 2013). Another Daily News article reports that Dilsa Capdeville, director of Kidscope Inc. in St. Thomas, often hears complaints from high school teachers that their female students are being recruited
into prostitution rings (Norris, 2013a). Caribbean sex tourism researchers Padilla and Castellanos report in their 2008 article that early sexual initiation is significantly higher in the Caribbean region than elsewhere in the world, and is a contributing factor to the high HIV rates for the region (p.34). This perverse practice explains why the fastest growing age bracket for contracting HIV/AIDS is among young people ages 13 to 29 years old in the Virgin Islands (Virgin Islands Health Topic, 2008).

Once exploited as minors, girls are absorbed into the adult sex trade and sex tourism rings helping to feed the culture of tolerance for the subjugation of females through displays of masculinity and power in male dominant cultures (Kempadoo, 2003; World Tourism Organization, 2012). The cultural norm of men demonstrating their social status and sexual identity through multiple heterosexual relations juxtapose with the practice of raping young girls then pushing them into the commercial sex industry is why a culture of tolerance exists for sex tourism in St. Thomas and elsewhere in the Caribbean (United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, 1997). The practice of men having a wife, a girlfriend, and a lover is not uncommon in St. Thomas nor is it discouraged. Likewise, it is not uncommon to know of men in the Virgin Islands to have fathered multiple children to as many women. Given that research exists within the tourism realm, it is important to note that promiscuous relations are not exclusive to local men.

Men who visit the Caribbean also demonstrate promiscuous behaviors, behaviors that have given rise to the sex tourism industry. Collected Internet data and conversations held with Duncan, Vikram, and Swanson have also indicated that such behaviors exist. On separate occasions, these men have all said that male tourists ask them regularly where they can go to find prostituted women. The persistence of this request makes it
seem like participating in commercial sex while on vacation is an integral part of male tourists’ travel experiences, just as Ryan and Kinder (1996) and Graburn (1983) have mentioned in their articles on liminal tourist behaviors. Two of the strippers offered a justification for this behavior stating that male tourists come to strip clubs because it makes the men feel powerful. Considering that roughly one million of the two million tourists who visit the St. Thomas annually are male, this is a high probability of a significant number of men seeking sex through commercial channels for the small territory, undoubtedly helping to explain the drive for human trafficking and the Virgin Islands high rates of sexually transmitted disease infections (United States Virgin Islands Bureau of Economic Research, 2005; Virgin Islands Health Topic, 2008).

Trying to understand more about how sex tourism relates with St. Thomas’ high STD rates, this researcher sought information from other Caribbean islands. The European Centre for Development recognizes the Caribbean region as a location plagued with sex tourism, and relates sex tourism with the region’s high rates of disease transmission. Calling for more research in the Caribbean to identify the impact sex tourism has on the tourism industry, Jason Hall, deputy director of tourism for cruise, events and attractions at Jamaica’s Tourist Board acknowledged:

Sex-tourism… is an enduring feature of Caribbean Tourism. The region is a famous target of many tourist customers looking for male (Barbados, Jamaica) and female (Cuba, Dominica Republic, etc.) sex suppliers. Moreover, this problem is connected to the transmission of several infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS. The region has the highest incidence of HIV/AIDS outside of Africa (Zapinno, 2005).
It is no surprise then that the Caribbean region, being a major tourist destination primarily for North Americans and Europeans, ranks second in the world for the number of HIV/AIDS cases; second only to sub-Saharan Africa (Virgin Islands Health Topic, 2008). Also not surprising are Calautti’s (2014) findings published in a very recent article which identifies sex tourism as the reason why HIV infection rates in the UK have doubled in the last three years. Recognizing that sex tourism is an unhealthy aspect of tourism and that it brings social problems that jeopardize the safety and health of the community, Hall goes on to say that he seeks partnerships with various entities across the region to address the harmful effects of sex tourism.

Interested in learning the specifics on the HIV/AIDS rates for St. Thomas, this researcher found a 2011 HIV/AIDS report published by the Center for Disease Control that included the US Virgin Islands. However, this report noted staffing issues and technical problems in the territory for a void in much of the USVI data (HIV Surveillance Report, 2011). It did show that in 2011, the Virgin Islands ranked second highest of all states and territories next to the District of Columbia for new HIV cases (HIV Surveillance Report, 2011). Like D.C., the Virgin Islands has an exceptionally high poverty rate, low educational achievements, a high number of single female head of households, and high minority population (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2013; Morello, 2013; U.S. Census 2000). Data from 2008 showed that the USVI reported one percent of the population (about 1,000 residents) having HIV (Virgin Islands Health Topic, 2008). Another newspaper article found that the last several years have seen a dramatic increase in HIV/AIDS diagnosis; 21 new cases in 2008, 31 in 2009, 29 in 2010, and 39 new cases in 2011 (Kossler, 2012). The pattern of new HIV/AIDS cases parallels the total number of tourist arrivals for these years; 2,435,000 tourists in 2008, 2,245,000 in 2009,
2,548,000 in 2010 and 2,642,000 in 2011 (United States Bureau of Economic Research, 2012). The year 2008 saw the least number of tourists and had the lowest number of new HIV/AIDS cases while 2011 had the highest number of tourists and had the highest number of new HIV/AIDS cases according to Kossler’s 2012 Virgin Islands Daily News article. These numbers indicate a parallel between tourists visiting St. Thomas and reported HIV infection cases (Kossler, 2012; U.S. Virgin Islands Bureau of Economic Research, 2012).

Despite these health risks, women like Maria are pushed into the commercial sex industries. This researcher met ‘Maria’, originally from Puerto Rico, in Spanish bar, which covers for a brothel behind and below the street visible bar in an impoverished section of St. Thomas. Tourists apparently did not frequent this bar frequently, Maria said. Maria wished more male tourists would come to her bar because they pay better than locals, leading this researcher to believe Maria is not at liberty to relocate her self. Furthermore, she said she is anxious to return to Puerto Rico, but cannot yet until she reimburses her ‘boyfriend’ who lives in Jamaica. The relationship Maria described with her boyfriend and the dynamics surrounding her stay in St. Thomas sounded much like the ‘lover boys’ scenarios described in the Shared Hope International (2007) report. This report explains how trafficked women are duped into believing that their boyfriends love and care about them, when in fact these men are actually their pimps forcing the women into prostitution. The women are forced to work off their debts to their pimps and traffickers through sex work before they can be considered ‘free’. Maria has lived in St. Thomas for four years and said she does not go out on the island for fear that people will recognize her as a sex worker, earning her a negative reputation and undoubtedly earning her unsolicited sexual harassment, particularly from the police.
Another interesting observation this researcher made relating to social status and gender bias came from a conversation held with a hotel front desk agent. Originally from Anguilla, ‘Marlene’ offered context on the challenges females in St. Thomas face, particularly West Indian females, due to the presence of sex tourism. When asked if she had ever been approached by a male tourist, Marlene said she would find it disrespectful if a male guest would ask her out, though she said business men often ask her where to go to dance or hang out. The fact that Marlene would find it ‘disrespectful’ rather than flattering, charming, or any other positive quality offers an indication of the social stigma West Indian females face if they socialize with non-West Indian male tourists. The risk of being perceived as a sex worker was enough of a deterrent for Marlene to not socially engage with male tourists. Together, Maria and Marlene’s stories offer insight on how West Indian females are perceived in St. Thomas’s tourism driven culture. Maria fears being recognized as a sex worker because the damaging social stigma related to sex work. For the same reason, Marlene disassociates with male tourists to avoid being mistaken as a ‘Maria’.

That sex trafficking and sex tourism are directly linked is becoming more common knowledge based on social research finding direct correlations between the two. Maria could have easily arrived from Puerto Rico via a twenty-minute plane ride since Puerto Rico is a U.S. commonwealth. Or she may have arrived to the territory via boat. If she were smuggled, this would have been the most likely way she would have arrived to St. Thomas since the waterways are much easier avenues for such clandestine activities than the airways. It is not surprising that smuggling and bribing customs officials still occurs today since these activities have been a part of St. Thomas’s history for centuries (Dookhan, 1994).
In St. Thomas, the boating industry, particularly the high-end yachting industry offers a major loophole in the fight against human trafficking and is rumored to be a primary way people are smuggled into and out of the island. St. Thomas boasts having the only multimillion-dollar mega yacht dock in the Caribbean able to accommodate yachts 450 feet long and beyond. When these boats dock in St. Thomas, the contrast between rich and poor is exacerbated tenfold. In a culture where unethical business practices are daily occurrences, it is not a stretch to imagine that these boats are involved in sex trafficking, particularly since other seaport tourist destinations have reported such incidences (Shared Hope International, 2007). This tactic has been found to be popular in Fiji (Shared Hope International, 2007), “[females] are recruited by other young victims to float out to foreign registered yachts moored a safe distance from the island’s shore where they are sexually exploited for small amounts of money” (p. 20). Though each vessel entering U.S.V.I. waters must clear customs, and though the captain of each vessel is responsible for clearing each boat’s passengers, enforcement of this process, particularly among the mega-yachts docking in St. Thomas is minimal at best. This researcher has heard of stories where charter boats have been rented for a weekend or a week by supposed ‘vacationers’ only to find out they were trafficking in people from nearby island nations like the British Virgin Islands, St. Martin, or St. Kitts.

A local West Indian man and peer to this researcher shared an observation that reveals how the boating industry and power within the greater tourism industry seems to favor wealthy white tourists. He described seeing two men together who he knew from St. John, each from very different walks of life; an elderly, rich, white man and a younger, not wealthy, Dominican Republican/Latin man. Both were standing on a secured, limited accessed dock that tethered dozens of multimillion-dollar mega-yachts.
To this peer’s surprise, the two men conversed briefly in Spanish. Then two women, described as Dominican Republican, appeared from behind the Dominican Republican man and walked to the side of the white man. This peer believed the situation he witnessed was a transaction where the women were trafficked from the Dominican Republican man to the white man. Wanting to do something about it, but distrusting the local police, this peer left the scene feeling disempowered and frustrated. This account demonstrated several intersecting dynamics: 1) the casualness and blatancy of a transaction like this happening, since this scene was reported to have occurred mid day, during lunch time, 2) how the boating industry is involved in the harboring and trafficking of women, and 3) the power inequalities within the tourism industry, specifically between males and females, whites and non-whites, and locals and tourists. All these factors point to a perpetuation of a culture of tolerance for sex tourism.

Other evidence of trafficked persons can be seen around the island as piles of wet clothes dotting the perimeter roads of St. Thomas. Furthermore, certain intersections of St. Thomas are known gathering sites for undocumented residents looking for cash work as laborers, domestic help, or any other type work. It is true that human trafficking exists in St. Thomas, which has been cause for two recent workshops designed primarily for police, fire, and hospital personnel (Bussard, 2008; Norris, 2013a; Selsky, 2007). After attending the most recent conference, it became obvious to this researcher that despite their awareness of the issue, officials in St. Thomas do not know to what extent the trafficking exists or how to formally address it because of the dysfunctional/ineffective operations between federal and local law enforcement agencies, the community’s distrust in the local police, local government corruption, and a high local police chief turnover rate: five in the past four years according to Kossler’s 2013
That government officials are involved in or benefit from sex trafficking has not been dismissed. Since power is at the root of male driven sex tourism and since other Caribbean nation’s sex tourism industries involve government employees, this point is a likely factor to consider. Furthermore, besides academic indicators based on research in other sex tourism locales, it is rumored in St. Thomas that the local police are directly involved with trafficking females for the island’s commercial sex industry. Another factor to consider regarding the lag to addressing human trafficking and/or the commercial sex industry it feeds, is that it is likely a low priority for St. Thomas officials. Again, given that St. Thomas’s culture is male dominated and that an overwhelming majority of policy/decision makers and government officials are male, addressing an industry that caters to males may not be a pressing issue.

A conversation held during a night of observation at Duffy’s supports the concept that not only do gender biases exist in St. Thomas, but so does a social hierarchy among the different island nationals living in St. Thomas, which may also explain officials the lack of concern for human trafficking in the territory. A peer of this researcher recommended speaking to ‘Tisha’ because she was a public school guidance counselor in St. Thomas and might have valuable input to offer on gendered life in St. Thomas. Tisha agreed that West Indian men are just looking to have sex while West Indian women are looking to have relationships. However, a West Indian female would be shunned for bringing home a white man, she said, unless the woman is from down island. Then it would be assumed that the woman is looking for financial assistance through her relationship with a white man. This comment piqued this researcher’s interest for two reasons. First, it paired with Marlene’s feedback and input this researcher received from
other St. Thomians who identified a gendered and racist double standard for West Indian females relative to West Indian males. Second, it related to what several social scientists have reported and what this researcher has been told about a hierarchical ranking among the various islanders living in St. Thomas. There are prejudices and stereotypes related to each Caribbean island and its people that are the basis of the social hierarchy (de Albuquerque and McElroy, 1982; Harrigan and Varlack, 1977). Anyone in St. Thomas can see the efforts people from different islands make to distinguish themselves from one another. For example, it is not uncommon to see a small Caribbean island national flag on a car’s rearview mirror indicating that the driver of the car is from that referenced island. Fresh to the island the first time, it was explained to this researcher by a native St. Thomian and former public school guidance counselor the crux of this hierarchy; ‘one hires a Haitian to cut grass, one hires a St. Lucian to handle money, and one hires a Dominican to clean house.’ Even within the Virgin Islands, people from St. Croix would prefer not to be considered St. Thomian any more than a St. Thomian would not like to be confused for a Cruzan. Island pride is very much a part of the Caribbean identity for reasons that relate to this social hierarchy.

Observations relating to the socioeconomic infrastructure of St. Thomas reveal sharp contrasts between locals and tourists. Dunn and Dunn’s (2002) study found that a lack of protection for and investment in local communities that exist in tourist destinations contribute to not only hostilities towards tourists, but also resentment towards local authorities, findings that are strikingly similar to what this researcher found in St. Thomas. For example, like what was reported in Dunn and Dunn’s study in Jamaica, St. Thomas tourists ride in air-conditioned taxis equipped with seat cushions and seat belts, while locals ride in open-air buses called safaris, rain or shine with no seat
belts and often no seat cushions. Like in Jamaica, St. Thomas resort guests are buffered from power outages and water shortages because of generators and resort desalination systems, while locals are often subjected to rolling blackouts and water shortages. Like in Jamaica, St. Thomas’s main tourist thoroughfares are sufficiently maintained and serviced while the rest of the island’s roadways are barely navigable by car, let alone by foot. And, like in Jamaica, millions of Virgin Island dollars are funneled into airport and seaport improvements, while the public school systems and healthcare services of the islands remain inadequate and underfunded (Dunn and Dunn, 2002; Kossler, 2013; Shea, 2011b).

The public education system in St. Thomas, for example, is one major point of failure. A Virgin Islands Daily News examination into the territory’s public education system revealed it has one of the lowest graduation rates (64 percent) of the United States despite having the most spending per pupil, and yet, the Virgin Islands public school system has the least numbers of teachers in the classrooms (Shea, 2011b). Furthermore, less than 50 percent of those on the Department of Education’s payroll are teachers and another 27 percent “are not directly employed in education at the territory’s public schools” indicating that there is a gross abuse of federal funds at the expense of children’s education (Shea, 2011b).

Other points of failure related to services for the community span nearly all branches of governmental and social services. At 54 cents a kilowatt, plans to cut the cost of energy production are always welcomed by islanders, especially if it comes from a free energy source like wind. But, when renewable energy means a reduction in payments to the islands sole source of power, the semi autonomous Water And Power Authority (WAPA), clearing bureaucratic red tape had proven to be impossible for one company
that tried to install windmills. Two large windmills resurrected in 2008 in the middle of the island to alleviate the already-taxed St. Thomas power company still sit idle, caught up in bureaucratic red tape before one turned for a brief two hours one afternoon in 2010, then stopped because of a power outage at the power plant to which the windmill generators were connected. The other had been sitting idle for so long that it had seized and was never able to run (Cooper, 2010b). Both are now permanently inoperable. Federal funds given to alleviate traffic congestion and water flow have also been grossly mismanaged resulting in what is infamously known as ‘The Bridge to nowhere’ – a 1.5 million dollar bridge positioned 17 years ago over a gut with no road to it or from it (Cooper, 2010c; Lohr, 2012).

Based on another Virgin Islands Daily News investigations, allegations that the emergency medical services on St. Thomas and St. John were rife with poorly maintained equipment, fraudulent staff training, favoritism, sexual harassment, and unjust hostility and retaliations were founded leading to the suspension of three supervisors, the departure of numerous emergency medical technicians, and a seriously understaffed emergency medical division for the two islands (Norris, 2013c). Other newspaper articles related to corruption and abuses of public services follow. In 2011, two local police officers and a port authority officer were convicted of drug trafficking, kidnapping, extortion, and robbery that went on for five years (Todd, 2012). The United States Attorney’s Office for the District of the Virgin Islands’ web page highlights egregious abuses of power from April of 2013 to May, 2014, some of which read: VIPD Officer Angelo Hill Arrested for Drug Trafficking, Two Virgin Island Resident Indicted on Drug Trafficking Charges, Former Executive Director of Virgin Islands Legislature Charged with Bribery and Extortion in Award of Government Contracts, [Department of Planning
and Natural Resource Director] Sentenced to 70 Months in Prison, and [Chief Executive Officer] of Schneider Regional Medical Center Sentenced to 21 Months in Prison for Tax Fraud (United States Attorney’s Office, 2014). Considering the abovementioned infrastructural problems of St. Thomas, the public’s trust in the local authority is understandably jaded. Additionally, it is understandable that community members feel powerless and apathetic regarding changes for improvement.

These headlines also made this researcher consider the validity of what she thought originally was island lore regarding some unethical practices among certain public servants. This researcher had heard from several difference sources that local police officers own and secure the brothels and strip clubs in St. Thomas. If true, this involvement would make them an integral part in the trafficking of females who work there. To find out if this rumor might be true, this researcher visited Tootsy’s, the East end strip club. She noticed what Shared Hope International (2007) researchers found in Jamaica, plain clothed St. Thomas police officers frequenting the strip clubs of St. Thomas. Additionally this researcher recognized one of the strip club’s security guards as a former co-worker. This security guard said he is now a full time police officer during the day and security guard for the strip club in the evenings. These observations add validity to the island rumor of police involvement in the commercial sex industry. Furthermore, this researcher noticed that there had never been any reports in the newspaper or mentions among people of prostitution arrests in St. Thomas. It now seems reasonable to believe that this is because the police are involved in the commercial sex industry. As it was explained to this researcher during field observations and from a formal interview, a female sex provider in St. Thomas will not be charged for prostitution by a police officer if she sexually services the police officer.
Corruption, revenge violence, domestic abuse, and promiscuous behaviors are just some of the ways power is demonstrated by locals in St. Thomas. Passive/aggressive behaviors are other tactics local residents use in reaction to feeling disempowered within the tourism industry. For example, poor/rude customer service, not attending to a tourist in gift shops for not use the customary greeting, charging more for tourists than for locals for food, drinks, or other items, and sucking one’s teeth as a sign of disapproval are all common tactics this researcher has either personally experienced or witnessed locals use to demonstrate their resentment and exert their power in tourist/local situations (Morris, 2013a; United States Virgin Islands Bureau of Economic Research, 2005). These tactics have not gone unnoticed by tourists either and are often reflected on online review forums like Trip Advisor. The following are June 2014 hotel reviews taken from Trip Advisor: “The staff that I did encounter was rude and overtly hostile”. “Let me just say if customer service is very important to you then this is not the place for you. The staff is very rude even if you just ask a simple question”. “The hotel and grounds were GORGEOUS! One of the most beautiful I’ve seen. The service was TERRIBLE and most of the staff was rude/unaccommodating-miserable”. Another review stated, “The hotel staff is not friendly or cheerful and every time you ask for something it really feels like you are disturbing them, like every one else you deal in this island.” “[The front desk agent] stomped her feet and walked away, YELLED at us "fine you got the rate, i will give you the lower rate!" She gave us such an attitude that I had to walk away bec I did not want to argue w/her”. Also recognizing that these are common tactics, Senate President Shawn-Michael Malone identified “a severe customer service situation” as a tourism industry challenge that the territory must overcome if tourism is to be successful (Morris, 2013).
To cull respect and save face for the local West Indian community in particular, a free monthly magazine called ‘This Week’, put out by the Department of Tourism, offers information on the Virgin Islands’ history, culture, and geography. It also advises visitors where to go, how to get there, what to wear, and how to greet locals. The opening pages of this magazine stress the importance of respecting local West Indians; “Preface all questions and requests with ….Good Morning or Good Day.” “Bathing suits worn ... in downtown areas tends [sic] to offend the local residents.” This magazine tries to stress to tourists that West Indians view St. Thomas as their home, and therefore visitors of St. Thomas must be respectful to them as their hosts. Despite this effort, many tourists view their time in St. Thomas as their well earned, time restricted, vacation away from home where they can do things they normally cannot not do, often including ignoring social protocol and etiquette. This is the cultural between local residents and many sex tourism researchers have also identified (Dunn and Dunn, 2002; Kempadoo, 1999; Sanchez Taylor, 2001)

**Field Observations Themes and Theory**

Status was a theme identified from field observations. Mentioned earlier in this chapter, Beech (2011) and Grandoit (2005) discuss how liminal practices, e.g. sex tourism, help to construct or reconstruct identities. Because a tourist does not stay long in St. Thomas, the risk of emotional attachment with a sex partner from the island is minimized, just as the risk of any slight to the local’s reputation is minimized. For these reasons, having ‘nsa’ (no strings attached) sexual relations and ‘dl’ (down low) sexual relationships have their status appeal for men. Thus each party is able to maintain or actualize their personal identities with tourists without compromising their local social statuses, a particularly significant factor for sex tourism participants who engage in extra
marital relationships or who have alternative sexual preferences. Status was important to females as well, as demonstrated by Marlene and Maria. Marlene was concerned about her social status enough not to engage in social activities with tourists. Maria does not want others to know she is a sex worker because of the negative social stigma it carries.

Financial security was another common theme identified by this researcher during field observations. Residents, radio talk shows, and the newspaper made daily references to the high cost of living. The constant awareness of the economic differences between tourists and locals further spurred feelings of resentment between these two groups. Exacerbating racial and ethnic tensions even more, Bryan (2001) says, especially those between locals and tourists, is the small size of St. Thomas; availing no space between groups. Many St. Thomas locals try to capitalize on the wealth of tourists. One man known to this researcher etches his living by hustling tourists. This young man was observed at the Vendors Plaza area of St. Thomas, a shopping area for tourists. He used to be a security guard at a quiet resort, but has since been terminated for reasons relating to ‘inappropriate guest interactions’. Now he tries to make a living by exploiting tourists. In reaction to his current situation, he said “Doin what I gotta do…just trying to get by”. Through transactions with tourists, this man tries to meet his financial security needs through passive/aggressive means of hustling.

Also concerned about financial security and providing for her family, one female stripper shared information about a local man with whom she had developed a sexual relationship. She said she was not pleased with the sex, but did not want to end their relationship because he is one of her best paying customers at the strip club when she dances. For the sake of the income this man provides, she will continue the sexual relationship. Both the strippers with whom this researcher spoke said they send the
majority of their earnings to their families in the Dominican Republic where family members are dependent upon the women’s work. If they do not earn more than the basic amount they need to live in St. Thomas, there is nothing extra to send off island, which is not an option, one of the women said. Maria is anxious to earn more money so she can pay her boyfriend back and move back to her home in Puerto Rico.

Abuses of power and instances of corruption identified power as a common theme during field observations. The desire for power seems to be high in St. Thomas presumably because the tourism industry that drives St. Thomas’ economy strips those affected by the industry of power. Though power is a need not specifically mentioned by Maslow (1943), McClelland (Mind Tools, 2014) discusses power within the contexts of personal and institutional or social powers. Personal power refers to one’s need to direct or dominate over others while social or institutional power refers to satisfying one’ needs through an institutional or group effort. Personal power seems to be what the sex providers seek to achieve.

Fisher (1990) discusses power and autonomy as being directly related to minority-majority relations, stressing that each group needs to have sufficient identity, autonomy, and power in order to enter an interdependent relationship in a secure, respectful and meaningful fashion. He adds, “A lack of sufficient identity and power on the part of the minority group results in ghettos if the group remains separate or in mere desegregation with limited intergroup acceptance if the group attempts to interrelate” (p.2). Power relations within the tourism industry initially appear to favor the local population, but after closer examination and after speaking with several front line tourism industry workers, this researcher began to sense that this impression might be a façade. The peer of this researcher claimed to have felt powerless to intervene after seeing what he thought
was a human trafficking transaction. Furthermore, feeling disempowered is thought to be a factor for the high rate of domestic violence in the Virgin Islands.

More to this point, this researcher identified gender biases as a theme during field observations. The police officer looking to beat a woman because he disrespected her, the former governor releasing violent sex offenders, and the high rate of domestic violence deaths in the territory confirm the double standards Marlene, Maria, and Tisha alluded to earlier in this chapter. It is theorized that those who feel disempowered and who resort to using passive/aggressive and violent behaviors may not necessarily direct their aggressions at the sources of the frustration, particularly if those feeling disempowered work within the tourism industry where tourists are only on island for a short period of time. This dynamic may explain the high level of violence against local females. For example, Calafat and associates (2013) have found that passive/aggressive behaviors in sexually provocative holiday environments, similar to the ones in St. Thomas, negatively skew gender identities, thus negatively affecting the entirety of both societies. Kempadoo (2009) also identified a connection between passive/aggressive behaviors, power, gender identities, and sexuality in tourist driven patriarchal societies within the Caribbean, “Violence to women is continually raised as a way in which Caribbean men seek to maintain patriarchal power, and sex becomes a primary means available to Caribbean men to exert control over and to inflict physical harm on women…” (p. 3). This statement accurately speaks to St. Thomas as well.

Lastly, this researcher identified another theme related to power. Locals said they gained a sense of power when tourists asked them questions about the island. All of the front line workers (tourists, taxi drivers, bartenders, etc…) said tourists would ask them daily where to go for fun, dance, and food. One local’s perspective was if anyone
had more power, he thought locals did because they knew the island and the tourists did not. Sanchez Taylor (2001) reported the same sense of power among locals compared with tourists. This researcher agrees that without having knowledge of the island, St. Thomas is a very difficult place to navigate initially. Furthermore, the driving pattern is opposite the mainland, road signs are limited, maps do not reflect the terrain accurately, and landmarks are fluid like, ‘the corner where the man sells newspapers’, or, ‘where the goat is tied to the mango tree’. It does not take long for a tourist to realize he or she needs help navigating the island, and therefore seeks the knowledge of someone local. However this empowerment is short lived. After two or three days of navigating the small island tourists generally know where to go how to get there, rendering local help unnecessary, and placing power back into the hands of the tourists.

**Field Observations Culture of Tolerance**

A culture of tolerance exists in St. Thomas and is facilitated by factors like the time constraints of guests, gender biases, social status, patriarchal attitudes of the local and visiting cultures, and the high cost of living. This culture of tolerance creates an escape for both St. Thomas residents and tourists because of an apathy for social regulations. For St. Thomas’s tourists, the anything-goes mentality of the island is a ticket to ‘vacation freedom’ allowing them to behave in manners they would not consider at home because of judgments, social condemnation, and a low tolerance for such behaviors. For St. Thomas residents, the carnivalsque atmosphere created by the daily arrival of thousands of tourists has created a permanent lifestyle of an abeyance of norms.

One factor in particular that this researcher suspects contributes to the culture of tolerance for sex tourism in St. Thomas is the power inequalities. The preoccupation with power and the socioeconomic hierarchies created as a result of power inequalities
involves not only island nationalities, but resident status, complexion, and gender effectively hindering the growth of a healthy local community. Power struggles can be found in every tier of island life from the socially disengaged island residents to the highest political leaders. The recent colonial history of the territory may have left Virgin Islanders with an unhealthy perspective of power and, as a result, a distorted world view, which relates to a loss of identity and a dehumanization of self (e.g. sex tourism) (McKinley, n.d.). Because the territory has such a 1) ‘rich’ history of chronically poor fiscal management and corruption despite the presence of a federal Comptroller, 2) high revenge violence rate in spite of the small population of the island, and 3) high prevalence of gender based violence especially considering the sexually violent history of the Caribbean region as a whole, collectively supports this post-colonial perspective and helps explains how power struggles relate to needs fulfilled through sex tourism and the culture of tolerance for it (Dookhan, 1994; Golimowski, 2006; Mattei, 2013; Kempadoo, 2001).

Within the context of tourism especially, powers and identity struggle are obvious. Viewing tourists as more powerful, Vikram said “tourists can almost get away with murder” simply because they are white, not from St. Thomas, and have disposable income. Other locals with whom this researcher has spoken share Vikram’s sentiments, seeing power as related to money and skin complexion. Chavez, the Ritz Carlton bartender, commented, “[Tourists] come down with big chips on their shoulders expecting that because they pay, they get special privileges”. The irony is that because of a culture of tolerance that exists in St. Thomas and this complexion/resident-status hierarchy, tourists are afforded greater privileges in St. Thomas. The two strippers from the Dominican Republic said men who come down to St. Thomas and come to their strip
club are on power trips, “[they] show how much money they can toss at the girls in front of all their friends”.

Overall, repeated instances of corruption, abuses of power, and an over-concentrated investment in tourism industry infrastructures instead of local social services have led locals to distrust authority, resent tourism and tourists, and be skeptical of formal institutions. The result is a culture that tolerates anarchic, unhealthy ways of seeking justice, feeling powerful, and finding security. Within this context, sex tourism is linked to crime, gender-based violence, and other social ills of St. Thomas, just as Seabrook (2001), Kempadoo (1999), Huda (2004), and Eades (2009) found in their sex tourism research.

**Analyzed Formal Interview**

Understanding a case through personal interviews is a recommended method for gaining access to embedded data. Data from this source help to compile an in-depth picture of the specific aspect of the case being studied, particularly when data from other sources are triangulated with it (Creswell, 2007). The interview data used for this research was acquired by using an interpretivist approach of semi-structured, open-ended interview questions (Appendix C) (Willis, 2007). Through this researcher’s social connections and working knowledge of the island, interviewees were selected using purposeful sampling meaning, this researcher selected “individuals and sites for study because they [could] purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon of the study” (Creswell, 2007, p. 125). Finding participants to interview was sometimes just a matter of walking onto a beach and talking to someone. As Rubin and Rubin (2005) suggest, “Sometimes… the best you can do is choose a
person who is in the appropriate position and then after interviewing him or her decide if you have obtained the information you needed” (p. 66).

Purposefully identifying a security guard at a beach resort as a potential interviewee led to a referral of Sofia, a sex worker, for a formal interview. Taxi driver George was suggested as an interview candidate from a peer. This researcher approached Peter J., Shiquan, Donald and Gary, and Jahson because of their frontline work with tourists; a water sports vendor/bartender, security guard, water sports venders, and a beach worker respectively. Peter J. suggested this researcher speak to Paulie, a resort manager. Jahnson recommended James, another beach worker. This researcher found it difficult to identify and formally interview female sex providers (besides Sofia), because, unlike Sofia, it was presumed that they were not working as freelance sex providers. It is also possible that the females did not trust this researcher. Sofia recommended another female sex worker for this researcher to interview, but she did not fit the qualifying criteria.

All formally interviewed sex providers were male except for one, Sofia. All male sex providers formally interviewed were heterosexual, except for one, Paulie. All male sex providers worked directly in the tourism industry. Sofia had to place herself in the industry, by making herself available at places like Vender’s Plaza. All the male sex providers had primary jobs for which they relied on financially, unlike Sofia. Sofia’s main source of income, like the other informally interviewed female sex workers, came directly from her sexual relations with tourists.

This researcher’s first interview was with Jahson, a West Indian beach worker at Coki beach who was originally from St. Thomas. Jahson was in his early thirties. He did not finish high school. He was the person this researcher first met when she started her
initial observations of Coki. He had been a consistent presence at Coki every time this researcher frequented this beach. For this reason this researcher asked Jahson if he was interested in sharing what he knows about sex tourism. After explaining the purpose of this research and how his input would contribute, he agreed to be formally interviewed then and there on the beach. Throughout that afternoon in between him assisting tourists, Jahson provided information pertaining to each of the questions listed on the questionnaire in Appendix C.

This researcher approached Peter J. during a quiet afternoon in a Red Hook restaurant. Peter J. was in his mid twenties and works as a bartender, water sports operator, and a boat mate for snorkel tours. Peter J. was white, originally from the United States, and was college educated. Knowing that the bar/restaurant where both this researcher and Peter J. were was a popular evening and weekend spot for tourists, this researcher asked Peter what he knew about sex tourism. After explaining the intent behind the question, Peter J. said he would be willing to discuss with more about what he knows during a formal interview. Via text messaging, an interview time and location were set up for the following week at a quiet section of an outdoor, public area of a closed restaurant. At the conclusion of this interview, Peter J. recommended this researcher speak with Paulie, who became the next interviewee.

With Paulie’s contact information provided by Peter J., this researcher spoke with Paulie about the nature of this research. He agreed to be formally interviewed and a time and a place were established. It was agreed that this researcher and Paulie would meet early one morning at a small restaurant in Havensight for a formal interview. Paulie was in his early thirties and was also originally from the United States. He too was college educated. Paulie was not only the only management level interviewee, but was also the
only homosexual interviewee, which added insight into the role of hotels sex tourism and homosexuality in the sex tourism industry.

This researcher met Paul John at one of Bolongo Bay’s restaurants one evening. Based on peer recommendation, this researcher approached Paul John and asked him about his willingness to be interviewed for this research. Paul John agreed and the interview took place then and there. Paul John was in his early thirties, white, from the United States, college educated, and worked as a fitness trainer and bartender. Paul John’s interview brought light to the benefits of having sexual relations with female tourists. He said because the women were on vacation and had disposable income, they expected to spend money, and so they did and included him in their spendings.

James, a recommendation of Jahson, was another beach worker at Coki. James was originally from Jamaica where he finished high school. He was in his mid twenties. His interview also took place at Coki beach. James’s interview revealed the approach beach workers take with tourists. For example, during the interview he pointed out that another beach worker was ‘doing it wrong’. This particular beach worker was following a group of newly arrived tourists onto the beach, waiting until they decided upon a place to stay to assist them with beach chairs. He explained that a beach worker should always lead a group onto the beach and set them up in a spot he decides. This way, he said, the group sees that he is in charge.

Taking a chance to find tourist/guest interactions at another beach, this researcher drove to Sapphire beach for observations. Instead, this researcher happened upon Shiquan, a security guard for the resort, propped under the shade of a sea grape tree. Since no one else was around, this researcher decided to make an introduction, explain this researcher’s study interest, and ask him what he knew about sex tourism. This
researcher learned that Shiquan, a thirty-year-old West Indian man originally from Jamaica where he received a high school education, was willing to answer this researcher’s questions about sex tourism in St. Thomas. Being relatively new to St. Thomas, Shiquan’s input offered depth to the understanding of the social hierarchy described above among the various island nationals living in St. Thomas.

Based on another peer recommendation, this researcher formally interviewed George, a taxi driver who was consistently stationed in Red Hook in the evenings, particularly on Wednesday evenings during Duffy’s Ladies Night. George was West Indian, in his late forties, and was born and raised in St. Thomas. After explaining what this researcher was looking to gain from George regarding this research, George agreed to be formally interviewed. This interview took place in the cab of George’s taxi while it was parked in the Red Hook parking lot. George’s interview revealed how a taxi driver can hold two roles in the sex tourism industry; 1) as a facilitator and 2) as a participant.

During field observations at a major resort, this researcher met Donald and Gary, jet ski operators. To this researcher’s suggestion of setting up times to be interviewed, these two men agreed to be interviewed at that moment after this researcher explained the premise of the researcher and what this researcher had already learned about the topic. Donald and Gary were both in their mid twenties. They grew up together in St. Thomas. Both men were of West Indian decent with thick island accents. These two men provided insight into the realm of digital social status, meaning the use of the Internet for gaining and maintaining social status among their Internet peers, specifically with Facebook.

Finally, as mentioned above, a peer recommended that this researcher interview Sofia who worked as a sex worker. After exchanging contact information, an interview time was set up to meet Sofia at a fast food restaurant near her home in a section of
Charlotte Amalie called Frenchtown. Sofia, a West Indian woman in her mid thirties was born and raised in St. Thomas and at that time was enrolled in night school to obtain her GED. She dropped out of school at age 11 when she became pregnant. Being that Sofia was the only female formally interviewed, her data provided a female’s perspective on sex tourism in St. Thomas, which supported the field observations data this researcher had collected.

**Formal Interview Themes and Theory**

In all, the formally interviewed male sex providers did not seem ashamed or embarrassed by their sexual relations with tourists, confirming what other sex tourism researchers had found and what this researcher has observed in the field; that sex with tourists is a source of social status for men. Sofia, on the other hand, admitted to having low self-esteem because of her sex work. This gender divide is a pattern Herold, Garcia, and DeMoya (2001), de Albuquerque (1999), and Kempadoo (1999) have also identified in their sex tourism research in the Caribbean. The double standards females face in St. Thomas make it so that being an openly heterosexual female is socially damning, while being an openly heterosexual male is reaffirming for his social status. This aspect fit with the status theme found among the field observation and Internet data collection process.

All West Indian male sex providers stated that their accents, dreads, or their dark skin complexion was an attraction for many of the female tourists. Several of these male sex providers reported that they were the first man of color with whom their female tourist partners had had sex. These repeated comments became a theme this researcher referred to as ‘islandness’, and aligned with what de Albuquerque (1999) referred to as female tourists’ racialized sexual fantasies.
Sexual relations with tourists were described as a thrill, exciting, or like a game by nearly all the formally interviewed males. This frequency called for themed category of risk/thrill. Some heterosexual male sex providers have a name for their conquest game; they call it ‘catch the yellowtail’. Like the informally interviewed males mentioned above in the Field Observation section, and like the male tourists who post comments on the online strip club forums, the formally interviewed male sex providers also dehumanize their female sex partners by referring to them as fish (yellow tail snapper is an edible tropical reef fish). Considering this point, it does not seem to matter if the males are the sex providers or the sex tourists, because in both cases, the females involved are subjugated, a point raised earlier by Weichselbaumer (2012). She stated that because even female tourists are operating in a male dominated society, they are still viewed as ‘servicing’ “the local male rather than the other way around” (p. 1222).

Another theme identified during the formal interviews that was also noted as a conflict in the Internet section of this chapter mentioned by both male and female sex providers interviewed was that nearly all of the tourists who have sex with locals were known to be married or in committed relationships. This factor makes the contexts of these sexual relationships anti-social, immoral, and socially deviant. Furthermore, this behavior is particularly concerning considering the high STD rates in St. Thomas.

More to the point of conflict related themes, this researcher identified a pattern from the formal interviews that ties to the conflicts identified during the informal interviews with other female sex providers. Sofia also stated that male police officers have demanded sexual services from her and do of sex workers she knows in exchange for ‘protection’, meaning for not deporting the women or charging them with prostitution. This problem smacks of not only institutional level gender biases, but also a clear need
for fair and equal protection for females, since being female is seen as a risk factor for police harassment.

Safety and security came up as a theme in another context during the formal interviews. High tourist season provides a sense of financial security for many living in St. Thomas including the sex providers who depend on tourists ‘generosity’ for the fulfillment of basic needs. Food and shelter needs of some local sex providers have been met through relations with tourists. Peter J. admitted to staying with female tourists for access to a bed and shower, necessities to which he did not always have access. Like the Dominican Republican strippers, Shiquan said he remits much of his earnings to his family in Jamaica. The more money he can save through his relations with female tourists, the more he can send off island to his family. Sofia said she could make $400-$500 in one session with a tourist and see her children for the rest of the week. But if she worked a minimum-wage paying job, she would have to work over 50 hours, not see her children for the week, and still not have enough money to feed everyone who depends on her.

Another theme that became evident during the formal interviews was local knowledge. Jahson, James, Paul John, Peter J. and Shiquan reported that engaging female tourists in conversation was a way to assess the tourists’ comfort with them. The males would talk about the island as a way to impress the female tourists, just as Pruitt and LaFont (1993) noted in their observations of male beach workers “During the tourist woman’s holiday in Jamaica, the man has the power of local knowledge” (p. 430). During these conversations, Jahson explained that he would sometimes sit on the tourists’ beach chair or towel, sometimes touching their leg or arm in the process to see how the females would react. If the tourists were receptive, a beach worker took it to mean there
was a potential for sex, Jahson said. This assumption parallels Jahson and James’ belief that women who come to St. Thomas looking to have sex with black men come for the ‘Mandingos’- the well-endowed black men. This belief reflects two common Caribbean legends 1) that West Indian males are well endowed, 2) Western women travel to the Caribbean specifically seeking sex with a West Indian man. In fact, these beliefs are the premise for de Albuquerque’s article titled *In Search of the Big Bamboo* (1998).

Therefore because of these beliefs, a West Indian man who is seen with a tourist not only gains status for being with a Western woman, but also gains status because it is assumed he is well endowed.

The ease in which the male sex providers said they can engage in sexual relationships with tourists, another theme, is coupled with the fact that there is a constant pool of new sexual opportunities pouring onto the island daily. New tourists provide new opportunities upon which men can practice their objectifying skills. Peter J. said that it is common for him to sexually engage a boat excursion guest in the galley of the boat while the other guests are snorkeling. Shiquan said that during the time of the interview, at least once ever two weeks he has the opportunity to have sex with tourists. During high season, it is much more frequent. Taxi driver George said that he never has to seek out sex from tourists because, as a taxi driver, they bring sex to him. Paulie said sex with tourists at his work happens weekly, not by just him but other hotel employees too. Though it is not formally condoned, it is commonly known that hotel employees have sex with tourists, he said. If it were condoned, Paulie admitted that employees would be seen coming and going from guests’ rooms all the time.

Casual sex or ‘nsa’ (no strings attached) sex was another common theme that fell initially under the ‘thrill’ theme later fell under the second cycle code of competition.
Because it is so easy to find a tourist willing to have sex, Paulie stated that all his sexual relations are with tourists. Dating someone local and risking a break-up could have serious negative repercussions due to the small size of the island. Therefore, a local relationship is not worth the risk for Paulie. Paul John said any relationship with a tourist that lasted longer than two or three days was pushing it, because then emotions start to get involved.

Sex with tourists aids in the creation and solidification of the male identity in St. Thomas because it provides them not only with stories to share with other members of their peer groups, but it also allows them opportunities to create their own identities while with tourists. In this sense, it is not just the tourists who engage in liminal behaviors. Additionally, through story telling male sex providers feel they earn and give respect to each other while also gaining a sense of belonging among their peer groups. Gary and Donald both admitted that having sex with attractive female tourists did matter in the eyes of their peers after originally stating that it did not. Paul John said that he and his friends have sex with tourists and talk about it. James said that he does not discuss his relations while he is with someone, but does when she leaves. Peter J. said sex with tourists is absolutely a source of bragging rights among his peers. The very fact that there is a known phrase among male sex providers referring to sex with tourists (catch the yellow tail) is indicative of two things; the commonality in which sex tourism occurs, and 2) the frequency of the story telling that follows.

A theme of belongingness was identified from formal interviews with several of the male tourists. Because of their sexual relationships with women from various locations, Jahson, James, Donald, Gary, Peter J. feel confident that they would always have places to stay if they were to travel off St. Thomas to the mainland United States or
to Europe. This sense of connectedness to a world beyond St. Thomas described by the male sex providers seemed to fulfill a sense of belonging for these men. Cohen (1971) spoke to this finding in his study of female tourists relations with young Arab males. He said, “[female tourists] provided the young Arab males with a ‘window to the wide world’ outside their small community” (p.224). The male sex providers of St. Thomas reported maintaining connections with their female tourists through phone calls, texting, or the Internet via social media outlets, like Facebook. Sofia did not report the same sentiments regarding earned social status from sex with tourists or from story telling, nor did she report feeling any off island connections based on her sexual relations with male tourists.

The gender biases that exist within the sex tourism industry that were mentioned during informal conversations with other women in St. Thomas were reiterated during Sofia’s interview and give rise to another theme. As mentioned earlier, noted was that none of the male sex providers interviewed relied exclusively on their sexual relations for basic needs like Sofia, Maria, and the strippers do. This dynamic shows that a female sex provider’s only access to basic needs is through the money they earn from the commodification of their bodies, thus making their bodies their source of power. Kempadoo (1999) writes about female slaves in the Caribbean during colonial times using sex as a source of power, “sex was commonly used as a strategy by women to acquire freedom from oppression, sold for money in order to purchase their own or their children’s freedom, or provided to a slave master in exchange for manumission” (p.8). This statement seems to echo existence of the females informally and formally interviewed for this research.
Noted also is that sex with tourists can also be a source of danger and harm, like when police sexually harass sex workers. Sofia admitted to having a scar on her head as a result of a patch of hair being ripped out by an upset male sex tourist. She also said male tourists have severely beaten her when she would not sufficiently accommodate them sexually, violence that confirms earlier noted statistics relating to gender based violence, pornography, and the commercial sex industry. As a result, Sofia’s attitude towards men in general and male police officers specifically, is negative and hostile. She also struggles with depression and low self-esteem, and has attempted suicide on several occasions as a result of her compromising her self-esteem needs for physical and safety needs.

Speaking about negative feelings, frustration and aggression stemming from feelings of disempowerment were themes among formal interviews too. Discussed previously, because of the presence of various biases in St. Thomas that play out across the different ethnicities, income levels, and sexes exacerbated by the tourism industry, resentments have been created and perpetuated, often presenting as passive/aggressive power struggles. Many of those interviewed for this research mentioned that they were cognizant of the power dynamics between themselves and the tourists; dynamics that they felt favor the tourists. Several male sex providers interviewed commented specifically that they did not feel empowered in their tourist relationships. Shiquan, the the security guard from Jamaica illustrated this point when he said he would never buy drugs for a female tourist he was with because if she had a bad reaction, he feared he would be blamed and assumed guilty, while the tourist would be assumed innocent. His fear also stems from the fact that he is a recent resident to St. Thomas and still feels like an outsider among other West Indian residents of St. Thomas. More to the point of feeling
disempowered, all non-white participants interviewed by this researcher were aware of their non-white status in relation to their white tourist counterparts based on comments their tourist partners have made. George specifically said he does sometimes feel used and exploited when white women want to have sex with him just because he is black a man.

Contemplating the power dynamics between tourists and local sex providers, this researcher considered the perspective of male sex providers having sex with tourists as a passive/aggressive move to gain personal power and autonomy from tourists and the tourism industry. It may be that the male sex providers’ behaviors are acts of covert retaliatory aggression for being marginalized, financially limited, and powerless within their own communities, particularly the non-white male sex providers. Three instances male sex providers shared during the formal interviews led this researcher to consider sex as an act of aggression. Describing sex with tourists as a game called ‘catch the yellowtail’ is one example where the men have dehumanized female tourists, viewing them as sexual targets to be conquered. Another came from Paulie who said he often teams up with other local gay sex providers to have sex with tourists to make it more about the thrill of the conquest. A third example came from Peter J. who described sex with tourists as a game he and his friends ‘play’ where the winner has sex with the most attractive female tourist in a group while the loser has sex with who is considered the least attractive female tourists of the group.

**Formal Interview Culture of Tolerance**

It is clear that being a male sex provider is a very different experience than being a female sex provider because of a culture of tolerance that defines sexuality and gender roles in St Thomas. The phrase ‘catch the yellowtail’ is indicative of the flippant
attitude local male sex providers have for sex with female tourists. Based on various data sources including formal interviews, the overall perspective local and visiting men seem to have towards females and sex supports the existence of a culture of tolerance for sex tourism. Based on these formal interviews, it is clear that hotel staff, police officers, security guards, bartenders, and taxi drivers are not only aware that sex tourism exists, but are directly involved in the practice. As the number of tourist arrivals increase in St. Thomas, the number of sex tourism opportunities increase for these front line workers, further entrenching the gender biases and power inequalities that perpetuate the subjugation of females in male dominated societies, thereby perpetuating a culture of tolerance for sex tourism.
Chapter Five: Discussion and Implications

Discussion

Tourism is about power and change. Tourists travel because they can. They want to be some place different and experience change (Graburn, 1983). They are attracted to something and move towards it out of curiosity (Ritzer, 2008, p. 578). Fuchs, Uriely, Reichel, and Darya maoz (2012) agree that risk and curiosity are attractions for many tourists. Likewise, Graburn (1983) and Calafat and associates (2013) have studied tourism and suggest that people travel because it offers them the opportunity for behavioral inversion. This liminal concept means the changing of morals, meanings, and norms of ordinary behavior to their abeyance or opposite while on vacation (Graburn, 1983). Behavioral inversion also offers a plausible explanation for sex provider’s involvement in St. Thomas’s sex tourism. Paul John admitted that having sex with tourists is risky behavior he would not do if he were still living in the states. Peter J. shared that sex with tourists is his source of entertainment, breaking up the monotony of island life. All the sex providers involved in this study viewed the risks associated with sex with tourists worth the benefits. All the participants admitted to receiving some kind of tangible benefit from their relations with tourists whether the gifts were food, drinks, trips, showers, places to stay, or money. The St. Thomas community, on the other hand, is not as fortunate in this risk/benefit ratio.

Tourism in general and sex tourism in particular changes people, in an underappreciated way because of how participants derive power from within the industry. Looking closer at Graburn’s (1983) behavioral inversion concept within the context of sex tourism may offer clarity on this perspective. For the tourists, having extramarital sex with someone living in St. Thomas while on vacation is an experience out of the
ordinary. Drinking and driving, hiring a prostituted female, and doing drugs because people are on vacation are more examples of what is considered to be an abeyance of morals (Graburn, 1983). A mother telling her young daughter “order whatever you want, you are on vacation” further demonstrates tourists’ behavior inversion. It is clear that these experiences offer their participants feelings of freedom from social constraints and norms. One feels a sense of strength or supremacy while in this liminal state; an appealing feeling that keeps those who have crossed the line going back to the source of power for more, which is in this case, the tourism industry.

Behavior inversion offers an explanation for what other sex tourist researchers have found studying sex tourists vacationing in the Caribbean. During recreational time away from home, people do things contrary to their normal moral standards; that is the point of vacation social scientists argue (Calafat, et al., 2013; Graburn, 1983; Ryan and Kinder, 1996). However, there are emotional risks involved when one’s morals are placated or dismissed, even if temporarily. These risks concern the sex providers too because they live and work in the tourists’ liminal world where each day a different batch of tourists descend onto the island displaying their freedom from moralities. Paul John admitted that he would never have ‘nsa’ (no strings attached) sex if he were still living in the United States, but in St. Thomas, he finds it acceptable because there is a culture of tolerance for such behavior. George also knows he would not behave in such risky ways sexually if it were not for the tourists asking him for his sexual services. In both of these examples, the sex providers have adopted the morals of the tourists’ liminal world, adding to moral decay of the island, a trend witnessed across the island among those involved in the tourism industry.
The emotional risks incurred within sex tourism affect the personalities of those involved long term, like a paradigm shift. These personal changes have a significant impact on the identity of a person. Studying the tourists’ perspectives, Frohlick (2008) related these risky experiences and the changes they conjure to secrets. “Once you know something, you cannot not know it” (p.33). Similarly, there is no undoing a liminal experience. Graburn (1983) defines tourism specifically as having a beginning-“traveling away from home”, a middle- the experience of change in a new place, and an end- the return back home with a new identity, making change synonymous with travel (p. 12). Beech (2011) adds that the liminal phase a person experiences is a time of identity reconstruction where the former sense of self is seriously disrupted, as ‘self’ then morphs into a new, different identity. When this transition involves negative gender and racial stereotypes, and an unhealthy association of how to meet needs, the personal changes are detrimental to that person and the society in which that person lives. This point is the crux of why sex tourism is innately problematic. Because the transformations that take place at the individual level after sex tourism participants have engaged in liminal sexual experiences are not positive and cannot be reversed, sex tourism erodes the moral integrity of both the host and visiting communities represented by the tourist and provider respectively, it perpetuates a lack of empathy towards others, and it devalues certain populations through a culture of tolerance (Andrews, 2004; Kunze, 2010; Shared Hope International, 2007).

Murphy’s 2010 article on black American male sex tourists traveling to Brazil and the Dominican Republic exemplifies how sex tourism changes societies for the worse. While on holiday the men report being treated like kings in exchange for the U.S. dollar. When these men return back to the United States, Dion Lessiter, M.S.W., asserts that the
men have a tendency to dehumanize American women, calling them ‘bitches’ and ‘whores’ because they do not dote on the men as the Brazil and Dominican Republic women did (Murphy, 2010). The culture shock these men experienced upon their return home prompted them to book more sex tourism trips away from home, a common trend for those who have crossed this sex tourism line, further entrenching their new personas’ unhealthy perspectives towards (in this case) females in both locations (de Albuquerque, 1999; Herold, Garcia, and DeMoya, 2001; Jacobs, 2009; Miller, 2011; Murphy, 2010; Sanchez Taylor, 2001). This is the cultural perversion of the sending countries referred to earlier in the literature review section of this dissertation. The strain male sex tourists create in their home social structures upon their return may be the dynamic that prompts females to travel to seek power and equality, thus perpetuating a vicious cycle of fulfilling needs in unhealthy ways.

Female sex tourism lends a different, yet still unfavorable, perspective of tourism regarding power and gender identities. How much power female sex tourists truly have given the context in which tourism takes place has been debated. De Albuquerque (1999) asserted that female sex tourism is just as offensive as male sex tourism, disputing Pruitt and LaFont (1993) argument that female driven sex tourism is less exploitative because it is based more on romance and emotions. However, based on the findings of this study, this researcher aligns with Jefferys (as cited in Weichselbaumer, 2012) who argues that the concept of “male ‘sex workers’ cannot exist” because the culture in which tourism exists is still male dominated (p. 1222). She argues that because female sex tourism takes place within tourism, which is a patriarchal industry where gender outranks economic and racial supremacy, females are always the victims who ultimately serve the males, even if the females are tourists. The power dynamic Jefferys (as cited in Weichselbaumer, 2012)
describes offers an explanation as to how sex tourism in St. Thomas further entrenches gender roles and patriarchal dominance. Additionally, this perspective explains why female sex tourists who permanently move to their respective traveled destinations find they have lost their previously held privileged status as tourists and are now subjected to the same sexism (sometimes worse) they experienced in their home locations, a dynamic reminiscent of St. Thomas (Jacobs, 2009; Kempadoo, 1999; Meisch, 1995).

It is clear that regardless of whether the sex tourists are male or female, and regardless of where the sex tourism takes place, a culture of tolerance for sex tourism and its affiliated problems, including the gender biases, are perpetuated by the inequalities inherent within the greater tourism industry. Munshi (2006) identifies macro-level systemic problems contributing to sex tourism claiming “Countries which utilise tourism as a strategy for development create a situation in which women’s sexuality is seen as an object of attraction for the male gaze, both domestic, but more so, foreign tourists” (p. 4463). This perspective includes all Caribbean islands including St. Thomas since all have utilized tourism as a development strategy. Power relations between the sending and receiving countries and the gender and economic inequalities within both countries, Munshi (2006) argues, “is the context in which the increase in international sex tourism can be analysed” (p. 4463). The dynamics of sex tourism, therefore, include abuses of power and economics through gender inequalities in both the sending countries and the receiving countries.

For these reasons mentioned above and because of sex tourism’s high association with sexually transmitted diseases, sex tourism in St. Thomas should be considered a major international health concern, while St. Thomas itself should be considered a site where major human rights violations are occurring. Timerman (2013) reports how sex
tourism in Latin America spins the “cycles of poverty, to underage prostitution, to human trafficking, to drug tourism and criminal networks” (p.1). Recently, Germany has been in the headlines for relaxing its position on prostitution, while ignoring the negative social ills associated with the international sex tourism market it has subsequently created (Barnett, 2013; The Economist, 2013). Many women working legally as prostitutes in Germany have been duped into the industry, trafficked from their home countries through false advertisements, and forced to live in deplorable conditions with no option of leaving willingly (Tuttle, 2013).

However, these are dynamics not unique to Germany. As recently as 2011, women in St. Croix were found to have fallen victim to the same trap. A police raid rescued trafficked women from Puerto Rico who thought they were going to work as dancers, but instead were forced into prostitution (Ellis, 2013). This is the same trafficking ruse Capdeville, director of Kidscope (a non-profit organization in St. Thomas) has warned about occurring in the Virgin Islands. The April, 2014 news headline of “2 Haitian Men Arrested In Alien Smuggling Conspiracy That Killed 8”, could very well have been another story of 33 duped immigrants, including women and children, destined for a life of sexual slavery in America’s paradise (United States Attorney’s Office, 2014). Two other recent news headlines relate to older St. Thomas men prosecuted for the rape, sexual exploitation, and coercion of minors (United States Attorney’s Office, 2014). In both of these cases, the Internet and Facebook specifically, was used to facilitate the sexual exploitation of these minors. The Tootsy’s strip club employment advertisement displayed in the previous section of this chapter may very well typify advertisements to which women like those in Germany, the women rescued in St. Croix, and the two Tootsy’s strippers informally interviewed responded. These two
strippers admitted they do not like living in St. Thomas and are anxious for their ‘time to be up’ so they can go back to the Dominican Republic, which suggests they are in St. Thomas not by choice, but rather they are forced to stay there, just like Maria.

The culture of tolerance for sex tourism and commercialized sex in St. Thomas is demonstrated by the fact that all those interviewed for this research, formally and informally, know where to go or where to send someone looking for prostituted women. This means that the prostitution of females in St. Thomas is not only a known occurrence, but is a tolerated known occurrence. Supporting this claim is the recent Virgin Island Daily News article stating that a pimp was charging male tourists $1500 per prostituted female per hour for their island experiences (Norris, 2013a). Ironically, this is the same price quoted by one of the formally interviewed male sex providers who works on the beach. But the real issue of the matter is that by virtue of having a pimp, this prostituted female did not have free will because a pimp managed her body; a pattern Capdeville reported seeing regularly. Capdeville said she has also witnessed female teenagers recruited into prostitution rings and children given to adults for sex in exchange for money, acts that violate human rights via human trafficking laws; “According to federal legislation adopted 10 years ago, the buying or selling of commercial sex with a minor is automatically human trafficking” (Norris, 2013; Norris, 2013a).

Lewis, co-director of the Women’s Coalition in St. Croix, also reported seeing females brought in to the USVI from throughout the Caribbean, promised marriage and a better life in St. Thomas only to find themselves and their adolescent daughters enslaved by captors who use the females’ undocumented status to control them (Norris, 2013a). The former director of Safe Zone in St. John, Iris Kern, claimed that the prevalence of trafficking young girls and women is due to men’s view of females; “many Virgin Island
men view women and children as their property. And many men of the highest stature are involved with little girls and not prosecuted”. Kern’s statement reflects a local apathy for men’s sexual behaviors with young females, behaviors that Police Commissioner Hannan had acknowledged existed (Lohr, 2002).

The reality that these non-profit directors reference, paired with comments Virgin Islanders have made on this topic, reveal an awareness of the existence of traffickers who act as ‘body’ brokers, reminiscent dynamics of the colonial slavery era. As stated before in Chapter One, The Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section of the U. S Department of Justice has a webpage titled Trafficking and Sex tourism that clearly states, “Sex trafficking is nothing less than slavery… Sex trafficking and sex tourism are heinous crimes that victimize the most vulnerable among us”. It goes on to say that because of sex tourism’s links to sex trafficking and prostitution, sex tourism is illegal. Sex traffickers violate human rights through the forced sexual exploitation of females while the community at large facilitates through apathy. Since St. Thomas’ primary source of income is tourism, it can be concluded that St. Thomas sex traffickers are facilitating sex tourism by providing access to and the use of trafficked females for the sex tourism industry (Andrew 2012; VINow, n.d.). Based on these analyses, it is clear that the sex tourism industry including sex trafficking in St. Thomas is nearly identical to the sex tourism industries in other Caribbean nations, adding an additional element to the post-colonial motif of the U.S. Virgin Islands.

**Implications**

For St. Thomas to effectively address sex tourism gender inequalities must be leveled. Since sex tourism is predominantly a male tourist driven industry, and because sex trafficking, by way of facilitators, provides the female bodies that feed the demand
for commercialized sex, gender and related issues need to be part of resolution discussions. The typical excuses of limited resources, poor allocation of resources, and ambivalence towards prostitution specifically cannot be entertained (CriminalDevelseLawyer.com, n.d.; Walker, 2012). To iterate sentiments expressed in the previous chapter, if a female in St. Thomas is in need of police protection or assistance, the chance of her receiving it fairly without any sexual expectations are compromised simply because she is a female, especially if she is a prostituted female. Furthermore, that Sofia reported being raped at a young age and pushed into the sex tourism industry by her mother at age ten stresses the significance of protecting children from the commercial sex industry. Sofia’s story is significant because it is representative of many females forced into the sex tourism industry. This research has shown that early forced sexual initiation is not only tolerated, but customary in some circles in St. Thomas and is linked to girls being forced into prostitution rings. Furthermore, it is known that adult female sex workers typically enter the commercial sex industry as minors. Sofia’s and the other females’ stories reflected in this research stress the need for not only greater gender equality, but also need for the protection of children from sexual abuse and exploitation.

Sweden’s approach to eradicating prostitution and thus sex tourism has demonstrated to be very effective for curbing many other social ills as well:

In Sweden prostitution is regarded as an aspect of male violence against women and children. It is officially acknowledged as a form of exploitation of women and children and constitutes a significant social problem… gender equality will remain unattainable so long as men buy, sell and exploit women and children by prostituting them. (Baklinski, 2013)
This response to addressing sex tourism was based on findings that an increase in social
tolerance (culture of tolerance) towards legalized prostitution led to an increase in not just
sex tourism, but also organized crime, violence against women, and trafficking
(Baklinski, 2013; Schulze, Canto, Mason, and Skalin, 2014). Combating sex tourism in
St. Thomas like Sweden’s approach may be a viable solution to remedying many other
problems St. Thomas is experiencing. A comparable approach would mean not only
acknowledging that sex tourism exists on the island, but also recognizing the facilitators
are involved. That being said, leveling gender inequalities by addressing the income gap
between minimum wage and livable wage should be priority. If income disparities were
adjusted, people like Sofia would not be financially ‘pushed’ to sell themselves to tourists
just to make ends meet. Addressing ‘pull’ factors would also be required.

One of the biggest ‘pull’ facilitators is technology. Just as economics plays an
integral role in sex tourism, so too does technology, particularly in the form of the
Internet. The Internet influences sex tourism scenes worldwide because it creates and
perpetuates a culture of tolerance through the dissemination of pornography, sex tourism
chat sites, blogs, and other resources for sex tourism. The Internet has become a
renowned resource for sex tourists, sex tour operators, human traffickers, and sex
providers around the world, including St. Thomas (Anatnarayan, 2011; Bender and
Furman, 2004; Pope, 2005). The Department of State’s Trafficking in Person’s 2007
report acknowledged the prevalence of sex tourism and the Internet’s role in it. “Sex
tourists use [online] chat rooms, message boards, peer-to-peer file-sharing servers, news
groups, and specialized websites to obtain information on potential destinations” (U.S.
Department of State, 2007). The United States Department of Justice (n.d.)
acknowledges the Internet specifically as a tool that “allows individuals to quickly and
easily exchange information about how and where to find [sex providers] in foreign locations”. The website CriminalDefenseLawyer.com also directly links sex tourism with sex slavery and human trafficking, problems where the preponderance of those involved are women and children (Steiner, n.d.).

Craigslist specifically has been shown to be directly involved with the perpetuation of prostitution and sex trafficking for sex tourism on the global level, and has also been found to be an active site for sex tourism in St. Thomas (Dart v. Craigslist.com, 2009; Kunze, 2010; Shared Hope International, 2007). Because internet sites like Craigslist promulgates a culture of tolerance for human trafficking and prostitution via sex tourism due to undefined legal boundaries, Kunze’s (2010) recommendations for establishing laws designed to protecting people from human rights violations incurred through internet-based human trafficking and prostitution are recommended for St. Thomas.

In sum, because of tourism’s role in the perpetuation of inequalities, this researcher questions the validity of the executive director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime when he said “The tourism sector can and should play a vital role in preventing human trafficking linked to tourism including sexual exploitation” (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2012). Though a memorandum of understanding to increase cooperative efforts to eradicate sex tourism was drafted in 2012, the gender vulnerabilities that exist in the Caribbean that often translate into transactional sex exist because of the tourism industry itself. The tourism industry, within which the sex tourism industry operates, creates macro-level inequalities, thereby rendering any tourism industry attempts to eliminate sex tourism null and void. If the Caribbean region is to effect change, its dependency on tourism and the colonial style relation it has with the
visiting (Western) nations need to be re-examined. That the sex tourism industry within St. Thomas parallels the greater Caribbean region’s sex tourism industry affords St. Thomas an opportunity to partake in regional efforts designed to combat sex tourism. These efforts would have to be tailored for each nation with the end result being a change away from the current state of tourism. This change would also mean a change from the current culture. Further change recommendations are outlined in the concluding chapter of this paper.
Chapter Six: Conclusion

This research set out to explore whether or not sex tourism exists on St. Thomas, United States Virgin Islands. It was hypothesized that sex tourism does exist in St. Thomas given its similar dynamics to other Caribbean islands that experience sex tourism. Based on the triangulation of data collected from the internet, field observations, and formal semi-structured interviews, this researcher finds that sex tourism does exist in St. Thomas, United States Virgin Islands and presents differently for male sex providers than it does for female sex providers. Human Needs theory has provided a structure through which to examine the factors of sex tourism in St. Thomas. Male sex providers’ identity needs of status and belonging are met through their sexual relations with tourists. Neither homosexual nor heterosexual male sex providers receive direct monetary benefits from tourists that often, rather they report receiving dinners, drinks, and sometimes gifts. Female sex providers rely completely on their sexual relations with tourists to meet physical needs like shelter and food for themselves and their families. Because of this gendered difference, male driven sex tourism, the most common type of sex tourism, is exploitative and therefore problematic. It is this dynamic that fuels gender and ethnic inequalities, misogynic attitudes which lead to gender based violence, the spread of STD’s through rape and early forced sexual activities, and unhealthy social norms overall. Within St. Thomas’ sex tourism industry, power and autonomy can be seen as needs both male and female sex providers meet through their sexual relations with tourists, though the general consensus seems to be that tourists have more power because of their complexion, their tourist status, and their wealth with white male tourists holding the most power.
The problems associated with sex tourism in St. Thomas are complex and multifaceted involving many intersecting layers of social life just as they do in other Caribbean nations that experience sex tourism. The similarities between St. Thomas and other Caribbean nations favor a regional approach to combating sex tourism. Such a collective effort will assist addressing sex tourism at both the micro level (interpersonal), and the macro level (systemic).

Murphy (2010) and Cobb (2006) report that liminal sexual experiences between tourists and locals negatively change the lives of those involved by altering the participants’ views on sexuality, identity, and gender roles in unhealthy ways. As such, sex tourism in St. Thomas perpetuates a skewed view of how to meet basic human needs within the current culture; a culture that includes gender biases and various social hierarchies. The lack of choice over their future, sources of income, and expressions of identity within the tourism industry offer St. Thomas residents limited sources for empowerment resulting in unhealthy means of deriving power; e.g. from physical abuse, domestic violence, revenge murders, and passive aggressive behaviors. If as Maslow (1943) claims, a ‘good’ society makes its members feel safe, and in turn safe members make a good society then the high level of violence, abuse, inequalities, and STD rates in St. Thomas indicate a seriously ‘bad’ and unhealthy society. The Human Needs theory explains that this societal breakdown is due to frustrations, resentments, and a lack of power afforded minority groups generated from within the general tourism industry and perpetuated by sex tourism specifically. Bailey and Ricketts (2003) found a “heightened risk for gender vulnerabilities within … the tourism sector “ (p. 72). These researchers go on to say that the gender demarcations found within the tourism sector ultimately have negative consequences for the greater society. Furthermore, viewed as one of sex
tourisms institutional facilitators (Kunze, 2010; Shared Hope International, 2007), websites like Craigslist, and the Internet in general, seem to be relevant sources for sex in St. Thomas for both locals and tourists, particularly for those of non-traditional, non-heterosexual lifestyles. The Internet further spreads the culture of tolerance for sex tourism. To what extent Internet based sex tourism advertisements shape the social fabric of St. Thomas has yet to be determined. What is known is that by acting as a facilitator for sex tourism, Craigslist and other Internet websites that advertise commercial sex in St. Thomas add to the erosion of a healthy community.

This researcher offers several recommendations for addressing sex tourism in St. Thomas. One recommendation this researcher offers is to assess the interest levels and attitudes of local residents on tourism. Recognizing how tourism was imposed on the territory and how it has created gender, ethnic, and economic divides, it might be found that tourism, as it exists now, is not supported at the grass roots level. Dunn and Dunn (2002) conducted a study in Jamaica in order to establish a baseline on the attitudes of Jamaicans regarding tourism. Their results found that to improve the tourism industry in Jamaica, poverty needed to be eradicated, local infrastructures like roads and housing needed to be improved, and more local businesses needed to be included in the tourism industry (Dunn and Dunn, 2002).

This researcher would like to see a similar study conducted in St. Thomas to assess how local residents feel about the tourism industry. If inequalities can be leveled in St. Thomas either through an elimination of tourism all together or through improvements within the tourism industry, then perhaps sex tourism will be reduced because the macro-level push factor will have been eliminated. Leveling of gender and ethnic inequalities would mean offering power to those who currently do not feel
empowered. The effects of this effort may reduce other crimes as well, like it did in Sweden.

Shifting the focus from the exotic Caribbean based on sun, sea, sand, and sex to a more eco-friendly view of the Caribbean is another recommendation this researcher and Grandoit (2005) offer. This shift offers a more sustainable resolution because it focuses on preserving the limited resources of the island like water and land instead of the exploitation of resources and people. Bryan (2001) supports a more sustainable regional approach to Caribbean tourism, which could also incorporate a regional approach to countering sex tourism. Other nearby Caribbean nations have campaign initiatives addressing sex tourism (Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, 2011). For example, tourists entering the British Virgin Islands customs office are faced with a poster reminding the tourist that females are not for sale. To date, no such campaign exists in St. Thomas presumably because of a lack of awareness of the problem. Collaborating efforts with the British Virgin Islands may prove to be an effective approach to combating sex tourism since these two island territories are so close to each other.

Ultimately, this researcher favors a regional approach to addressing sex tourism in St. Thomas. Due to the similarities among Caribbean island nations and based on readings from other parts of the world where sex tourism also exists, this researcher agrees with Hall’s 2007 call for a regional effort to combat sex tourism. This approach would mean serious infrastructural changes would need to occur, like establishing a safe-haven for victims recovered from the commercial sex industry, conducting shake-downs in the police department and other government agencies that might be involved in facilitating sex tourism, and designing recovery programs to help those involved transition to non-exploitative careers. Hall’s motivation for a regional approach was to
address the rising STD rates, but as this research has shown, sex tourism is affiliated with many more problems besides just STD’s.

Furthermore, the ripple affect caused by a crackdown on sex tourism in part of a region could call a surge of sex tourism in another, as was found to be the case when Asian nations had increased their sex tourism eradication efforts. Asia’s crackdown efforts created a rise in Eastern Africa’s sex tourism rates (IRIN, 2007). In East Africa, laws related to combating sex tourism are lax (if they even exist), particularly in Kenya, where nearly 2 million tourists visit its coastline each year. Subsequently, the rise in sex tourist visits has added to its climbing rate of HIV/AIDS prevalence (4th ranked in the world) (Ahsan, 2013; IRIN, 2007). Like Kenya, the Virgin Islands’ tourist visits have increased over the years to the point now where the territory sees slightly over 2 million tourists a year. Also, like Kenya, the STD rates of the USVI have increased, perhaps due to a crackdown on sex tourism in the British Virgin Islands, and now the U. S. territory ranks among the highest of all the United States and territories for the prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases (Blackburn, 2011).

There were limitations to each data source used for this research. For example, this researcher may not have discovered Internet sites designed with female tourists in mind who seek local male sex providers. Just because this researcher did not find such websites does not mean they might not exist for St. Thomas. Additionally, the Craigslist data had its limitation. The identification of the Craigslist personal advertisements to analyze was based on a mention of or reference to tourist/local interests. However, because it cannot be confirmed who actually posted the advertisements, this factor is a limitation. Similarly, because this researcher counted the number of times tourist/local
ads were posted, this research included all relevant posts, even ones which appeared to be repeat advertisements. This could be viewed as a limitation.

The field observations this researcher made could be viewed as subjective. Though this researcher had a guideline of behaviors for which to identify based on what other sex tourism researchers had observed, the subjective nature of field observations is always a factor to consider. Because the researcher sought to identify particular behaviors for this study, researcher bias could have played a role in field observations. Finally, regarding the formal interviews, male interviewees may have embellished their stories for this researcher because she is female. Likewise, because the researcher is female may be why only one female sex provider is included in this research. Gaining access to other female sex providers proved challenging for this researcher. More formally interviewed female sex providers could have offered greater depth on the female’s perspective of sex work within the sex tourism industry in St. Thomas. In all, data triangulation was used to mitigate these limitations and defend the argument this researcher proposed in that sex tourism does exist in St. Thomas. Therefore, the data collected and presented in this research should be considered valid and authentic.

For several reasons the field of Conflict Analysis and Resolution benefits from the addition of this study. This research shows that sex tourism is a phenomenon where conflicts exist at every level including the individual, institutional, and international levels. The role that conflict resolution practitioners play in combating sex tourism will be crucial. They can be tasked with helping to connect the dots between the realities of sex tourism and the social problems occurring within society. As professionals well versed in conflict theories, conflict resolutionists will play an important role in collecting more data on how problems like poverty, gender inequalities, and power play a part in the
existence of sex tourism in St. Thomas. Armed with these data, conflict resolutionists can help disseminating information as to why and how sex tourism is problematic and rally support for taking steps aimed at eliminating sex tourism. Specifically, international laws and protocol will need to be examined, edited and/or drafted. Practitioners experienced in alternative dispute resolutions and negotiations will be helpful with this aspect. Helping sex tourism victims navigate the legalities of immigration issues and work visas will require the skills of court/legal mediators. Practitioners knowledgeable in facilitation techniques will be needed to assist in collaborative efforts designed to address policy changes regarding the tourism industry within the Caribbean region. And finally, focus groups aware of the Internet’s role in sex tourism and sex trafficking can be created to combat the online elements of this industry. A caveat to all these approaches, however, is what the Conflict Analysis and Resolution discipline teaches; that for successful change to occur all key parties involved must want it. Presently, there is little drive to change because of a lack of awareness of the extent of the problem. Once it is made known, through the use of human rights advocates, how sex tourism negatively affects people and societies, it is more likely that there will be an interest in change.

To conclude, it is hoped that the findings of this research inspire future social science studies in the Virgin Islands. More understanding is needed on how tourism impinges on gender and ethnic inequalities, economic disparities between the local population and the tourists, and other social problems of the territory. More research is needed to identify connections between sex tourism and issues like human trafficking, STD infection rates, gender-based violence, and the exploitation of minority populations. Lastly, greater understanding is needed on how integral a culture of tolerance is in the existence of sex tourism in St. Thomas. The information presented in this research should
be of value to local and federal government agencies, academia, and health and human
rights organizations for finding definitive evidence that sex tourism does exist in St.
Thomas and related to the overall health and well being of the island community.
Appendix A

Craigslist Postings

* 7/2/12  T      
Visiting couple to St John..sexy gf want to be pounded - w4m - 21 (St John )
Date: 2012-07-02, 9:44PM AST
Reply to: zrg2s-3115392660@pers.craigslist.org
Sexy couple. Wife want to be pounded into submission. No bi or gay guy. Husband want to watch wife get fucked...no strings. Just pound her into submission
   Location: St John
   it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
PostingID: 3115392660

*7/2/12  T      
Sexy blonde visiting looking to meet VERY muscular aggressive guys - w4m - 21 (St Johns)
Date: 2012-07-02, 11:28AM AST
Reply to: hctm7-3114020161@pers.craigslist.org
Hi. I'm visiting StJohns for five days for a wedding. I know it sounds bad but I just want to be a cum dump. You don't have to be nice or romantic. I just broke up with my bf and I want a muscular aggressive guy to walk in, fuck me, cum inside me and walk out...I'm staying at the grande bay in the middle of town.
   Location: St johns
   it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
PostingID: 3114020161

*7/2/12      T      
Visiting StJohn looking to suck cock for dudes who need to bust a nut - m4m - 31 (St John)
Date: 2012-07-02, 11:14AM AST
Reply to: mkfpp-3113986976@pers.craigslist.org
Hey guy. Good-looking guy visiting for 5 day. Just looking to be a cock sucker for any locals or married dudes that need to get off. Staying in town and just looking to be an anonymous cock sucker. No recip nec...good-looking nice discrete guy here who willing to let guys bust a nut down my throat
   Location: St John
   it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
PostingID: 3113986976

* 7/4/12  T      
Sexy blonde visiting St John looking for a muscular guys for fun - w4m - 21 (St johns )
Date: 2012-07-04, 9:32PM AST
Reply to: kdrte-3119156094@pers.craigslist.org
I'm visiting until Saturday for a wedding. I love aggressive muscular guys. You don't have to be romantic or nice to me. I just want to be a cum dump for aggressive muscular guys
   Location: St johns
   it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
PostingID: 3119156094

* 7/5/12      L      
Looking for a couple - m4mw - 28 (st.thomas)
Date: 2012-07-05, 7:30PM AST
Reply to: kgvcp-3121000419@pers.craigslist.org
Hey, I am an attractive 28 year old. I'm looking for a couple or single lady who want to have fun on vacation. email for pics! let's make memories! :)  
   Location: st.thomas  
   it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
PostingID: 3121000419

*7/6/12  T  
BBC on vacation - m4w - 29 (St. Thomas)  
Date: 2012-07-06, 10:16AM AST  
Reply to: hbp7z-3121888785@pers.craigslist.org
I'm in St. Thomas for a week and I'm looking to hangout/hookup with a woman (have to make that distinction lol) while I'm down here. If you're interested after viewing my post, send me a reply. Replies with pictures will probably get first consideration.  
   Location: St. Thomas  
   it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
PostingID: 3121888785

*7/11/12  T  H  
NSA Fun - 33 (ST John)  
Date: 2012-07-11, 11:39PM AST  
Reply to: 7tbhn-3133991397@pers.craigslist.org
Staying at the Westin  
Looking to host some good fun...  
Any guys sucking nsa??

*7/9/12 T  T  H  
Playmate wanted - m4m - 42 (Great Bay StT)  
Date: 2012-07-09, 10:33PM AST  
Reply to: phxks-3129483389@pers.craigslist.org
just in, looking to unwind with a handsome guy at my place...  
get naked, have a drink, make out, fuck around...  
hot, safe, masc, no strings play...  
145 5'10" lean masc athletic clean vers educated discreet  
hosting at my hotel near Great Bay  
prefer white male send pics and stats in the first email please

*7/10/12 T  H  
Any couples looking for a boy toy? - m4mw - 21 (St. Thomas)  
Date: 2012-07-10, 5:37AM AST  
Reply to: dwzsm-3129798168@pers.craigslist.org
Very attractive and in shape 5'9 165 8c blk with 6 pack abs. Visiting St. Thomas for a week and looking for someone or a couple to play with. Open to age and possibly able to host. I have a beachfront condo to myself and I will be here all week. Please respond with pictures and put "boy toy" in the title. I will reply with pictures.

*7/11/12  L  H  
Hot 31 yo white male for fun women and couples - m4mw - 31 (St John)  
Date: 2012-07-11, 6:27PM AST  
Reply to: dgixq-3097770168@pers.craigslist.org
hi. I am really fun and just super horny these days. Please do not waste my time. send me pics. be real
I can host or come to you. at your resort, hotel, house or whatever.
I am very open minded, love to please and be pleased. I love to explore and welcome all races and types.
Im 5'9 160, athletic. good looking.
Get in touch.

* 7/15/12   T     H  
hot boy in town for a couple of weeks - 23 (STT)  
Date: 2012-07-15, 8:58PM AST  
Reply to: jmvlc-3141784122@pers.craigslist.org  
Tall, in shape, hung white boy on island through July.
Looking for other younger sexy guys for fun.
I can host and drive.
Pic in reply please.

* 7/16/12   T     H  
Vacationing Top guy looking - m4m - 42 (St Thomas)  
Date: 2012-07-16, 6:24PM AST  
Reply to: hngn9-3143724812@pers.craigslist.org  
Discreet top guy here alone on a vacation. D/D free and loves to be naked with other men.
  Location: St Thomas
  it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests  
PostingID: 3143724812  

* 7/17/12   T     H  
Vaca fun with younger guys - m4m - 38 (St Thomas)  
Date: 2012-07-17, 11:04PM AST  
Reply to: grwjf-3146495589@pers.craigslist.org  
I am visiting St Thomas and would like to get off with a younger (prefer white) guy. You must be under 30 and the younger the better!!! I might consider asian or hispanic.
I am disease free and discreet - you should be too. I am 5'10" hwp and a nice cock.
I have pics for trade. Please send yours if you want more of me. Also please reply with age and stats.
I can keep in the DL and would be up for just servicing your cock if that is all you want. I have a car and I can host also.
  Location: St Thomas
  it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests  
PostingID: 3146495589  

* 7/18/12   T     H  
couple seeks women or other couple - mw4mw - 25 (st thomas)  
Date: 2012-07-18, 9:47AM AST  
Reply to: 4wn5v-3146981267@pers.craigslist.org  
hard to type from a cell phone so bear with us
younger couple staying at a resort seeks a couple or other women for fun before friday. into anything std freee and drug free, descreet is a must email us if interested
stats
  her 5ft 95lbs bl bl
  him 6ft 2 220lbs br br 7in
  Location: st thomas
  it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests  
PostingID: 3146981267
*7/18/12  T    H
mwm all bttm - 46 (st john)
Date: 2012-07-18, 5:46AM AST
Reply to: q5gmm-3146772126@pers.craigslist.org
5 10 247 ddffree mwm all bttm tight hole big ass st john wed to wed can not host
  Location: st john
  it's ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
PostingID: 3146772126

*7/18/12  F    H
Honeymooners seeking Woman - mw4w - 25 (St. John Chocolate Hole)
Date: 2012-07-18, 1:43AM AST
Reply to: gtn6p-3146664336@pers.craigslist.org
I will be honeymooning on St John the week of July 30th. Looking for a young female who wants
  to join us in our first threesome one night. Would love to e-mail/text before hand to set up
evening. Please send us picture and we will send pictures.
  Location: St. John Chocolate Hole
  it's ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
PostingID: 3146664336

*7/19/12  F
Vacation get away - m4w - 40 (St John )
Date: 2012-07-19, 2:28PM AST
Reply to: 2qtpk-3149882129@pers.craigslist.org
Arriving on St John on the 20th and staying at a luxury resort. I'm a mwm, GL, mase hwp looking
  for extra discrete fun while there. If you are there or will be for the next week, let me know. Let's
add a little spice to our trip. Just ask, who knows.
  Location: St John
  it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
PostingID: 3149882129

*7/20/12  T    H
mwm all bttm - m4m - 46 (st john)
Date: 2012-07-20, 6:35AM AST
Reply to: 5pk2x-3151201363@pers.craigslist.org
Mwm all bttm 5 10 257 ddfrre tight hole
Big ass
Love to service
Here w family can not host
  Location: st john
  it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
PostingID: 3151201363

*7/20/12  F    H
Needing a couple for Vacation Fun - m4mw - 44 (st thomas)
Date: 2012-07-20, 3:01PM AST
Reply to: nppcc-3152131553@pers.craigslist.org
I'll be visiting St. Thomas mid August and looking for a couple with a willing wife to share. I can
host. Are you down for some MMF fun?

*7/23/12  T
Lonely on St. John - m4w - 47 (St. John)
Date: 2012-07-23, 10:07PM AST
Reply to: ntnrb-3158970704@pers.craigslist.org
I'm lonely here on St. John looking to have some adult NSA fun after a hard day's work. I am very discreet, looking for single or married women that wants to have some fun. I am also open to couples too. Let's have a little fun. I am a clean cut average looking fun loving guy that wants a little fun NSA. Send me an email and let's talk and setup some fun.
    Location: St. John
    it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
PostingID: 3158970704

*7/23/12    T    H
MWM seeks same - m4m - 43 (St John)
Date: 2012-07-23, 8:20AM AST
Reply to: 2djqk-3157134659@pers.craigslist.org
Masc mwm, 43, GL, hung, cut seeks same for discrete play. On St John resort for a few days. You want it or you wouldn't be looking, right? Only you and I will ever know. Tell me what you want.
    Location: St John
    it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
PostingID: 3157134659

*7/23/12    T
RITZ CARLTON Blk/Bull - m4w - 50 (St.Thomas)
Date: 2012-07-23, 1:01PM AST
Reply to: pqp3p-3157717067@pers.craigslist.org
Clean cut ,Hung, Dominant,Black staying a Ritz Carlton St.Thomas from Thursday to weekend . Looking for select Couples and Females. Let me show you the PRIMITIVE SIDE of the VIRGIN ISLANDS. Put Primitive in your response. No Spammers. Pics go to front of line.
    Location: St.Thomas
    it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
PostingID: 3157717067

*7/23/12    T    H
couple seeks women or other couple - mw4mw - 25 (st thomas)
Date: 2012-07-23, 6:17AM AST
Reply to: 4wn5v-3146981267@pers.craigslist.org
hard to type from a cell phone so bear with us younger couple stayinging at a resort seeks a couple or other women for fun before friday. into anything std free and drug free, descreet is a must email us if interested
stats
her 5ft 95lbs bl bl
him 6ft 2 220lbs br br 7in
    Location: st thomas
    it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
PostingID: 3146981267

*7/24/12    F
Hang out with me at the hotel - m4w - 35 (St Thomas)
Date: 2012-07-24, 10:33AM AST
Reply to: d6fkb-3159617198@pers.craigslist.org
I'm a professional, athletic, funny latin guy that will be visiting St Thomas for a week, business.
Just looking for a nice person to hang out at the hotel pool or beach, no sex required, just fun and to have a good time, like to meet people and talk. Your picks will get mines.

Location: St Thomas

it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests

PostingID: 3159617198

*7/25/12   T   H
Str8 BI Discreet Blo for Blo RITZ STT - m4m - 38 (Ritz Hotel)
Date: 2012-07-25, 6:35AM AST
Reply to: n8clik-3161585254@pers.craigslist.org
Visitor looking for discreet and hot play with another MAN.
160lb smooth clean cut ddf
Prefer masc thick hung discreet and clean. HIV- required.
Send photo and interest type BEACH BLO in title to void spam
Serious only

Location: Ritz Hotel

it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests

PostingID: 3161585254

*7/25/12   T   H
Bi, DL, Straight, or Drunk! - m4m - 26 (St. Thomas)
Date: 2012-07-25, 3:23PM AST
Reply to: mmhfw-3162573492@pers.craigslist.org
Been in a relationship with the same girl since high-school.
broke up just before I came on vacation, now i want to try something new.
not sure what i want, but i know i want something.
hit me up with a picture, and ideas of what we could do.
not into daddys, or grampas.
not into girly guys, or bigger guys.
420/or drinking, i can provide. cant host.

*7/27/12   T   H
mwm all bttm - 46 (st john)
Date: 2012-07-27, 6:58AM AST
Reply to: q5gnm-3146772126@pers.craigslist.org
5 10 247 ddffree mwm all bttm tight hole big ass st john wed to wed can not host

Location: st john

it's ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests

PostingID: 3146772126

*7/27/12   T   H
Hot masc bottom looking - m4m - 35 (St John)
Date: 2012-07-27, 11:58AM AST
Reply to: hndjs-3166434605@pers.craigslist.org
My hot ass needs some attention... St John til Aug 3. Can travel to STT if you're close to redhook.
35, 150, masc, fit, clean/neg. Prefer musc/masc. Hit me up guys. I can send pix.

Location: St John

it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests

PostingID: 3166434605

*7/27/12   T   H
Two Hot, masc dudes on STT for NSA fun - m4m - 41
Here until Sunday. Looking for hot, masc, normal, sexy guy or couple for uninhibited fun at our place (Marriott). One top one vers guy here. Send a decent face shot with your response. We're serious, you be too.

*7/28/12  T
Big cock for fun - m4w - 32 (Vacation)
Date: 2012-07-28, 1:09AM AST
Reply to: bdw3w-3167950281@pers.craigslist.org
So here is the deal.... I am on vacation in the Virgin Islands on St. Thomas for 2 weeks. My cock is hard and my bed is empty. I am looking for a little fuck toy to drain my cock while she cums loudly for me over the phone and then maybe in person. Do not wait, lets get off together!

*7/28/12  T  H
Mwm seeks same - m4m - 45 (St Thomas resort)
Date: 2012-07-28, 11:54AM AST
Reply to: gbgxq-3168535050@pers.craigslist.org
Mwm seeks same. Very discrete and seeking the same. Nice thick hard cock. First timer ok. Why not? Only you and I will ever know. Ritz
  Location: St Thomas resort
  it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
PostingID: 3168535050

*7/29/12  T  H
mwm all bttm - 46 (st john)
Date: 2012-07-29, 1:17PM AST
Reply to: q5gnm-3146772126@pers.craigslist.org
5 10 247 ddfree mwm all bttm tight hole big ass st john wed to wed can not host
  Location: st john
  it's ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
PostingID: 3146772126

*7/29/12  F  H
Visitting St. Thomas Week of 8/5 m4mf, m4f, m4m - m4mw - 37 (St. Thomas )
Date: 2012-07-29, 8:41AM AST
Reply to: kfgkx-3170132043@pers.craigslist.org
I'm a gl, wm, clean, ddf, visiting the Red Hook area the week of 8/6 and looking for a couple or others (m or f) to have some clean, safe adult fun. 5'11 175lbs, smooth, exercise regulary. Please send stats and what you are into. Pics will need to be traded to meet. Please be hwp, clean, ddf and discrete. Thanks!
  Location: St. Thomas
  it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
PostingID: 3170132043

*7/31/12  T  H
Hot masc bottom looking - m4m - 35 (St John)
Date: 2012-07-31, 11:33AM AST
Reply to: hndjs-3166434605@pers.craigslist.org
My hot ass needs some attention... St John til Aug 3. Can travel to STT if you're close to redhook. 35, 150, masc, fit, clean/neg. Prefer musc/masc. Hit me up guys. I can send pix.
  Location: St John
it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
PostingID: 3166434605

*7/31/12  T  H  
Couple Staying East End-Aug 25 - 52 (Elysian/3-days/STT)
Date: 2012-07-31, 9:11AM AST
Reply to: njtvv-3174315650@pers.craigslist.org
Two good-lookers silver daddys good shape, excellent health, WM 4 WM, arriving PM the 25th would like to meet other like-minded guys for fun and some action. In shape, very clean, both orally talented and love recip. Be clean, neat, discrete, healthy of course. Can meet at the beach, Little Magens, or on beach closeby east end of island.
  Location: Elysian/3-days/STT
  it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
PostingID: 3174315650

***************************************************************
*10/6/13  T  H  
Visiting st. Thomas until Oct. 11th. - m4m - 69 (Bluebeards)
Visiting and looking. Hairy, hung, masculine senior looking for some man fun while here.
  Location: Bluebeards
  it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4113871423 Posted: 2013-10-06, 8:39PM AST

*10/7/13  T  H  
Visiting Bluebeards castle looking for fun. - m4m - 69
69, hairy, hung, uncut looking for fun in my private room here at Bluebeards. Here until Friday night. Looking for now.
  it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4116168345 Posted: 2013-10-07, 9:47PM AST

*10/10/13  T  H  
69, hairy hung looking - m4m - 69 (Bluebeards castle )
I am 69, 192# very hairy and have 71/2". Love oral. Here until Saturdat morning and looking for fun.
  Location: Bluebeards castle
  it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4122204987 Posted: 2013-10-10, 7:47PM A

*10/11/13  F  H  
visiting saint thomas 10/15 for 10 days - m4m
hey ill be on business looking to explore im white gl 39 6ft 170 eight cut masc gl im always horny and im looking for a curious clean white guy 20-30 to meet up with I don't want to do a lot of emails while there (will b around others) ide like to semi set it up now if u hav a place or know of a good beach or something that we could meet up at maby a few times while im there that would be great please b serious and be ready to giv good directions I don't know area thanks
  it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4122704046 Posted: 2013-10-11, 5:56AM AST email to a friend

*10/14/13  T
Visiting (STT/STX)
Young, elegant and educated traveller, constatly visiting the Islands. Need companionship. Are you that special lady...? please reply with # and pixs

Location: STT/STX
it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4128682411 Posted: 2013-10-14, 12:00PM AST

*10/17/13 F H
Who wants some fun on cruise ship? - m4m - 45 (celebrity summit)
Looking to suck off other guys while on cruise aboard celebrity summit sailing from San Juan November 30th. Have stops in St. Lucia, Barbados, Antigua, St. Martin and St. Thomas. Looking on islands and onboard ship. Younger and uncut guys to the front of the line.
DD free and clean and safe.
Send age, stats and pics for reply.
Lets set something up so we have something to look forward too.

Location: celebrity summit
it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4136573738 Posted: 2013-10-18, 9:20AM AST email to a friend
Reply hsxxw-4134874337@pers.craigslist.org flag [?] : miscategorized prohibited spam best of
Posted: 2013-10-17, 11:58AM AST

*10/17/13 L
Slender Woman for Visitors - w4m - 48 (St Thomas)
Are you visiting, have a hotel room or villa to play in? Slender local woman looking for generous guys or couples for uninhibited fun. Just trying to make ends meet and have some fun.

Location: St Thomas
it's ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4134874337 Posted: 2013-10-17, 11:58AM AST email to a friend

*10/17/13 T
Want company - m4w - 40 (STT)
Want the company of a nice lady. Me a traveling business man...I am staying just tonight. Maybe tomorrow.

Location: STT
it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4135543251 Posted: 2013-10-17, 4:41PM AS

*10/18/13 F H
Who wants some fun on cruise ship? - m4m - 45 (celebrity summit)
Looking to suck off other guys while on cruise aboard celebrity summit sailing from San Juan November 30th. Have stops in St. Lucia, Barbados, Antigua, St. Martin and St. Thomas. Looking on islands and onboard ship. Younger and uncut guys to the front of the line.
D free and clean and safe.
Send age, stats and pics for reply.
Lets set something up so we have something to look forward too.

Location: celebrity summit
it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4136573738 Posted: 2013-10-18, 9:20AM AST
*10/18/13  L  H
Just your average everyday normal guy - m4m - 55 (stj)
looking for visiting average everyday normal guy 40-55 for discreet get together.... take a little
vacation from your vacation an hour or so
Location: stj
  it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4136512820 Posted: 2013-10-18, 8:31AM AST

*10/20/13  T  H
Staying at marriott want to suck/bottom - m4m - 24 (St. Thomas)
24 staying at the Marriott Frenchman's cove for the week and would like to suck and bottom
while here. Age and race does not matter just be clean. Also would like a facial and or mouthful
to finish. Never been with a guy before but want this fantasy to come true. No better time than to
meet someone while on vacation.
Location: St. Thomas
  it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4141583190 Posted: 2013-10-20, 9:50PM AST email to a friend

*10/22/13  F  H
Lifestyle swinger bar recommendation? - mw4ww - 34 (St Thomas)
Hey! We are a couple who is into the swinging lifestyle. We will be visiting St Tomas in three
weeks and would like to know if there are any bars or places to find friends. Any
recommendations are appreciated.
Location: St Thomas
  it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4145271959 Posted: 2013-10-22, 4:26PM AST email to a friend

* 10/22/13  F  H
Lets have fun nov 8-10 - mw4w - 35 (Bolongo beach)
Hello! We are a couple from Puerto Rico visiting St Thomas nov 8-10. Will be staying at
Bolongo Beach. Would love to meet a couple or a single woman to share some drinks and party.
She is 5' 115lbs, a hottie with perfect boobs. He is 5'8", 155lbs, fit with a great smile. Drop us a
line. Serious inquiries. We are serious for fun! Please no gay or single men.
Location: Bolongo beach
  it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4145044822 Posted: 2013-10-22, 2:51PM AST email to a friend

*10/23/13  L  H
Couple seeking Bi Male Visitors - mw4m - 50 (St Thomas)
Couple seeking visiting males in hotel rooms.
Seeking Caucasion orally bi males, cut preferred but all considered.
PLEASE: Include your hotel and a description of yourself in first email. Body photos will be
required before meeting.
If you are unable to send a hotel a description in your first email, you are probably not for us.
Location: St Thomas
  it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4146933843 Posted: 2013-10-23, 1:18PM AST email to a friend

*10/28/13  F  H
Fun?? - m4m - 23 (St Thomas)
Hey coming to st Thomas on wensday looking to have some fun and possible spend the night
I'm flying to Miami on Thursday I'm vers 5"11 slim 9uncut let me know if anyone is available
Location: St Thomas
it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4157488408 Posted: 2013-10-28, 5:31PM AST email to a friend

*10/30/13 L H
VGL couple looking for male - mw4m - 42 (St. Thomas)
Looking for visitor to meet us- join us for an afternoon and evening. We are a very good looking couple- early 40 year old couple who would like to enjoy another man. We have played with couples and single women before- never a single guy.
Interested? Discretion a must and assured.
Location: St. Thomas
it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4161674892 Posted: 2013-10-30, 4:43PM AST Updated: 2013-10-30, 4:59PM AST email to a friend

*10/30/13 F H
new years fun - m4mw - 23 (st.thomas)
hey whats going on 23yr old bi white college guy thats going to be in st. Thomas from the 31st until the 6th.for vacation. looking for a couple that can host since ill ne there with family. very laid back down to earth respectful kind of guy. Ive played with couples before and always had fun. Vers top and bttm for him, and very oral for both of you. Love eating pussy and ass if shes into that if not thats cool too. 7.5in cut cock and shaved down there DD free but social drinker and 420 friendly. Just looking to meet up grab some drinks and go from there. Respond with fun in st. Thomas in the header so i know your real. Have pics to trade and would like to see yours too.
Location: st.thomas
it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4161109757 Posted: 2013-10-30, 12:51PM AST email to a friend

*11/2/13 L H
Fit NSA guy here for play: vers - m4m - 43 (STT by Marriott)
Still looking for fit discrete guy, local or visiting; for some strip, massage, hj/bj, ass play and more - do love to btm if serious. There has to be someone out there that is safe, fit , discrete, fun and not afraid to send at least a torso pic?? If this is posted, I'm still looking :)
Location: STT by Marriott
it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4167625187 Posted: 2013-11-02, 4:58PM AST email to a friend

*11/3/13 T H
Married on the DL - m4m - 40 (St. John)
On vaca looking for sum discreet action on the sneak. 40 yr old wh male seven cut. Here till nov 8th
Location: St. John
it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4168709206 Posted: 2013-11-03, 11:25AM AST email to a friend

*11/3/13 L
NSA Rainy Day Discreet Fun - m4w - 43 (St Thomas)
You 40+ here on vacation alone and its raining and raining. Lets have some discreet NSA fun.
You are interested in hooking up with a White Male slender attractive clean fun person that is also looking for similar company and fun, lets have a drink together and see where we go from there. Maybe we can turn the rainy day into a fun memory....

Location: St Thomas

it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4168864924 Posted: 2013-11-03, 12:48PM AST

*11/4/13 L
Feel good Again. - 40 (St John)
Are you recently divorced/single? Have you been alone for a while? Do you remember what it feels like to feel good. Are you traveling to St Thomas/ StJohn or do you live here?. If your looking for love, pleasure or fantasy, I always enjoy good company. Hopefully it can be more than a one time thing. Reply if interested for my personal contact, and lets trade photos.

Location: St John

it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4170237664 Posted: 2013-11-04, 4:49AM AST

*11/9/13 T
Erotic casual fun !! - m4w (St Thomas)
In town for two weeks only.I am single ,tall,well built and attractive male looking for a fuck buddy ,casual encounters NSA in St Thomas ! I am fun and friendly , down to earth and clean !! Your search is over if you want someone to go down on you ...deep inside of you and make you cum again and again !! I am very romantic and would like it discreet. Respond with your pic for a quick response !!

Location: St Thomas

it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4181251180 Posted: 2013-11-09, 12:55PM AST

*11/11/13 T H
Sexy down to earth visitor seeks contact - m4m - 49 (St John)
Single masculine cute nice guy hoping to discover some romance and hot fun when visiting in a few weeks. Massage in my hotel room, sunset walk on the beach, dirty dancing, never been there so open to all ideas. Attracted to healthy athletic guys my age or younger, non smokers, good kissers. Pic, stats, etc.

Location: St John

it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4185889849 Posted: 2013-11-11, 7:06PM AST

*11/11/13 T H
Big 8 inch cock here visiting for the week - 36 (St Thomas)
Hot 36 year old white dude seeks another or younger white Hispanic dude for safe fun. is this you email with pics get reply

Location: St Thomas

it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4184490597 Posted: 2013-11-11, 8:55AM AST

*11/11/13 T H
Sexy wht jock visiting looking for Black / Latin Muscle - m4m - 33 (Marriott - St. Thomas)
Ath/musc white jock looking for now. Me: 6' 1", 180, ddf.
Partial to blk, ltn , wht but all hot guys welcome. MUSCLE ++++
Looking for a Big, THICK cock to suck ... more if we click.
Please respond with recent PIC and STATS in first email.
*11/11/13  F  H
Who wants some fun on cruise ship? - m4m - 45 (celebrity summit)
Looking to suck off other guys while on cruise aboard celebrity summit sailing from San Juan November 30th. Have stops in St. Lucia, Barbados, Antigua, St. Martin and St. Thomas. Looking on islands and onboard ship. Younger and uncut guys to the front of the line. DD free and clean and safe. Send age, stats and pics for reply. Let's set something up so we have something to look forward too.

Location: celebrity summit

it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests

*11/11/13  T  H
VISITING ST THOMAS FOR THE WEEK - m4m - 36 (ST THOMAS)
36 YEAR OLD 8C THICK HERE WHITE SEEKING WHIT HISP OR LATINO MEN FOR FUN SEND PICS FOR FUN HERE WITH FAMILY WILL NEED TO BREAK AWAY CLOSE TO MEGANS BAY HEADED TO SAPPHIRE BEACH...AND OTHER PLACES TODAY

Location: ST THOMAS

it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4184979658 Posted: 2013-11-11, 1:04PM AST

*11/12/13  L  H
Couples for visitors swingers - mw4mw - 48 (St Thomas)
Nice couple here to play and at the same time here to in joy our island for more info reply

Location: St Thomas

it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4186713766 Posted: 2013-11-12, 8:38AM AST

*11/12/13  T  H
visitor - m4m - 54 (STT)
visiting MM up on the east end looking for some fun. 54y/o, 6', 200, average looking guy with nice package. Into exploring most things. really like body contact, oral, passion, etc. looking for other similar guys. can host at my hotel after some basic information is exchanged including pics. send me yours and I will send you mine. arriving Thursday for about one week. thanks guys

Location: STT

it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4186894395 Posted: 2013-11-12, 10:55AM AST

*11/12/13  F  H
IN St. Thomas 11/19-23 - m4mw - 40 (Westin)
I'm straight in shape and looking for DISCREET fun. Would love to find some skinny dip partners, or just some drinks in the room?

Location: Westin

it's ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4186897188 Posted: 2013-11-12, 10:56AM AST

*11/12/13  T  H
hot guy 36 y/o staying over by megans bay for 2 more days where r u 8c - m4m - 36 (St Thomas Megans Bay)
Where are the other hot dudes, I got 8 thick inches to share while I am here for the right guy clean and DDF here expect the same not into over 45 sorry....Send pics if you are interested...Horny as fuck here
Location: St Thomas Megans Bay
it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4187994193 Posted: 2013-11-12, 6:39PM AST

*11/12/13 T H
asian guy visiting ready for you - m4m - 35 (STT)
pm me for those guys who look for same... matured guys are a + can't host and can't travel...you must be clean and disease free.. pics for trade when you sent it first.
Location: STT
it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4188006412 Posted: 2013-11-12, 6:44PM AST

*11/15/13 F
Single Blk female seeking LTR - 25 (STT)
Hello, I will be visiting my girlfriend in March for spring break and was hoping to meet up with a guy who can keep me company and show me around the island. Strictly platonic at first, looking to take things slow and see what becomes. Race does not matter. A little about me: I am a 25yr old female, student, 5'9 with some curves. I am from Ohio, I go to the University of Akron, No kids, single, I don't smoke or do drugs. I love animals, the ocean, seafood, wine, cooking, and reading. I love someone with a sense of humor and who can make me laugh. If you would like to get to know me better send me a email! put Ohio in the subject so I know you read this!
Location: STT
it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4192664537 Posted: 5 days ago

*11/16/13 T
On Vacation. Looking for Company. - m4w - 27 (Saint Thomas)
I'm twenty seven, 5'7", hundred forty five pounds, green eyes, short curly brown hair, over 8 inches circumcised, DD free. Dominant and very kinky.
I'm here on vacation for the week, and would love to share some time with an exciting woman. Maybe meet up for a few drinks, then back to my place or some fun on the beach?
Let me know.
Location: Saint Thomas
it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4196903962 Posted: 3 days ago

*11/17/13 F
Seeking bbc week of thanksgiving - w4m - 40 (St thomas)
Coming from Miami. I'm a middle aged single heavy white chick. I don't share my pic. My friend said to go to st thomas nov 23-30 for bbc. Must be clean and circumcised. Prefer at least 8" long and 5" around. I haven't had sex in two years. I crave a clean big black one.
Location: St thomas
it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4197806508 Posted: 2 days ago

*11/17/13 F H
**Looking for a running partner, exercise ..... - m4m - 39 (st. thomas/bluebeards resorts)**
I am traveling to the Virgin islands/st.thomas/bluebeards resorts....this jan. for 3 weeks i am looking for a running partner, exercise and weight lifting at my resort or close by....and some man on man fun afterwords....ideally into straight men who like getting their cocks sucked off. no smokers and ddfree only....hit me back anyone welcome. First and foremost exercise is a must for an hour or so then some fun...pool hot tub or showers...and out doors?

Location: st. thomas/bluebeards resorts
it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4197162337 Posted: about 2 hours ago

**11/17/13 T**
**On Vacation. Looking for Company. - m4w - 27 (Saint Thomas)**
Im twenty seven, 5'7*, hundred forty five pounds, green eyes, short curly brown hair, over 8 inches circumcised, DD free.
Dominant and very kinky.
I'm here on vacation for the week, and would love to share some time with an exciting woman. Maybe meet up for a few drinks, then back to my place or some fun on the beach?
Let me know.

Location: Saint Thomas
it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4196903962 Posted: about 5 hours ago

**11/19/13 T**
**St Thomas NSA - w4m (St Thomas)**
I am currently on St Thomas for the next 6 months and taking appointments for NSA fun
What are you waiting for
Lets do this

Location: St Thomas
it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4200955299 Posted: about 14 hours ago

**11/19/13 T**
**Erotic casual fun !! - m4w (St Thomas)**
In town for two weeks only,I am single ,tall,well built and attractive male looking for a fuck buddy ,casual encounters NSA in St Thomas ! I am fun and friendly , down to earth and clean !!
Your search is over if you want someone to go down on you ...deep inside of you and make you cum again and again !! I am very romantic and would like it discreet. Respond with your pic for a quick response !!

Location: St Thomas
it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4181251180 Posted: 10 days ago Updated: about 4 hours ago

**11/20/13 T**
**ANYONE...here for the day - m4w - 26 (St thomas)**
hi there
really horny white male here and i am open to suggestions and someone that is looking to have some nsa fun on the island..here till 4pm. let me know ASAP

Location: St Thomas
it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4203024272 Posted: about 8 hours ago

11/20/13 T H
smooth asian guy - m4m - 38 (stt)
visiting smooth asian up for fun... can't host. you must be clean and df.. mature men preferred.. all races welcome. your pics get mine...up for anything...hurry!
   Location: stt
   it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4204114674 Posted: 4 days ago

*11/21/13      F      H
Who wants some fun on cruise ship? - m4m - 45 (celebrity summit)
Looking to suck off other guys while on cruise aboard celebrity summit sailing from San Juan November 30th. Have stops in St. Lucia, Barbados, Antigua, St. Martin and St. Thomas.
Looking on islands and onboard ship.
Younger and uncut guys to the front of the line.
DD free and clean and safe.
Send age, stats and pics for reply.
Lets set something up so we have something to look forward too.
   Location: celebrity summit
   it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4205029492 Posted: 3 days ago

*11/23/13      T
Night in Paradise - m4w - 26 (STT- Marriott)
Looking for NSA tonight. Young, athletic, white male here on vacation. Returning back to Texas tomorrow.
   Location: STT- Marriott
   it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4208233703 Posted: a day ago

*11/24/13      T
Phone Sex - m4w - 40 (visitor)
Hot phone sex with big thick white cock call 817 eight three two nine four three six
   Location: visitor
   it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4209071069 Posted: a day ago

*11/24/13      F      H
Looking for a running partner, exercise ..... - m4m - 39 (st. thomas/bluebeards resorts)
I am traveling to the Virgin islands/st.thomas/bluebeards resorts....this jan. for 3 weeks i am looking for a running partner, exercise and weight lifting at my resort or close by....and some man on man fun afterwords....ideally into straight men who like getting their cocks sucked off. no smokers and ddfree only....hit me back anyone welcome. First and foremost exercise is a must for an hour or so then some fun..pool hot tub or showers...and out doors?
   Location: st. thomas/bluebeards resorts
   it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4197162337 Posted: 7 days ago Updated: about 17 hours ago email to a friend
Reply g5kxb-4217239800@pers.craigslist.org
flag [?] : miscategorized prohibited spam best of Posted: a day ago

*11/27/13      F      H
Visiting on the Epic dec 4th - m4m - 50 (saint thomas)
I am visiting on the NCL Epic on the 4th dec
It would be nice to find a buddy to hang out naked, enjoy lots of teasing , very oral and bottom
here. Could someone recommend a beach where open minded people hang out? Thanks Pedro

Location: saint thomas

it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4215943712 Posted: 2 days ago

***11/27/13 F H
4th dec visiting for the day hot discrete erotic adv m4m - m4m - 52 (Epic Cruise)
I am visiting for the day on the NCL cruise Epic, so, I don't live on the island and you will never see me again nor anybody would know. I would be a buddy to is visiting.
I have been to told to hang out at Little Megans Beach.
I am looking of a horny man, mature would be very nice, who could host and enjoy having his cock slowly sucked and edged than enjoy fucking a guy for a long while. Safe using condoms than taking it off to cum on his face.
shoot a couple of loads and I leave to visit around the port and back to the ship.
Anyone may be interested?
I am 52, very clean educated, nice friendly personality a charming nice man.
Nice tight ass, 6.5 cut if you like to suck it too.
Just a couple of days before leaving so I will be checking my mail
Its classyflmanatthotmaildotcom

Location: Epic Cruise

it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4217239800 Posted: a day ago

*11/27/13 F H
Visiting St Thomas December 6-10 and HORNY - m4m - 58 (St. Thomas - Windjammer and close by)
I will be visiting St Thomas December 6-10 and would like to meet up with a YOUNGER guy and have some fun... 5'8", 145 lb., vers, love uncut to play with, I am very toned, can host or travel....this is one of the few times I am traveling alone and want to find some fun...lets plan something... Would hate to visit there and have no fun... I can send a ew pics if interested...craigslist wont post the few I have for some reason. Thanks

Location: St. Thomas - Windjammer and close by

it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4216859438 Posted: a day ago11.27.13

*11/29/13 L H
Seeking Caucasian Cock - m4m - 62 (St Thomas)
Clean Ultra Discreet WM seeking Cut Cock to play with.
Prefer a visitor but will answer all.
I cannot entertain, has to be your place.
Prefer quickies first

Location: St Thomas

it's ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
Posting ID: 4219088180 Posted: 3 days ago

*11/30/13 L H
Any visitors free this weekend? - m4m - 43 (near STT Marroitt)
Any one free for a good f tomorrow (Saturday) afternoon? Fit, discrete here, require the same.
Can host for a good time. Need minimum torso pic to chat - yours gets mine.
**11/30/13**

**TH**

*Looking for island fun - mm4m or mm4mm - 28 (Charlotte Amalie)*

Tonight is our last night in Charlotte Amalie and we are looking to have some fun with a guy or couple. Versatile bottom strongly preferred. We can host in our hotel room.

We are white, clean, disease free, HWP, and attractive. You must be clean and disease free. Again, tonight is the only night we can do this...

In your response, send a clear face photo and your stats (for both of you if you're a couple). We will send a photo in return. We are very real and are looking forward to this!

Location: Charlotte Amalie

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*12/8/13*  

**T**

*Erotic casual fun ! - m4w (St Thomas)*

In town for two weeks only, I am single, tall, well built and attractive male looking for a fuck buddy. Casual encounters NSA in St Thomas! I am fun and friendly, down to earth and clean!! Your search is over if you want someone to go down on you...deep inside of you and make you cum again and again!! I am very romantic and would like it discreet. Respond with your pic for a quick response!!

Location: St Thomas

do NOT contact me with unsolicited services or offers

Posting ID: 4181251180 Posted: about a month ago Updated: 8 days ago

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*12/12/13*  

**F**

*Visiting the Virgin Islands Soon - 29*

I am a American Man Coming to the Virgin Islands in late December. I would like to go out on a date with someone while there.

We can either go out to dinner or look at some of the landmarks I came to see.

Some info about me:

I am black, 5'8, 200lbs with brown eyes and black hair

I have included a pic so if you are interested send me an email with a pic and I will get back to you.

P.S.- Hopefully you can see this ad is too detailed to be fake :)

I would love to hear from you soon

do NOT contact me with unsolicited services or offers

Posting ID: 4243346478 Posted: 3 days ago

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*12/14/13*  

**F**

*Visiting the Virgin Islands Soon - 29*

I am a American Man Coming to the Virgin Islands in late December. I would like to go out on a date with someone while there.

We can either go out to dinner or look at some of the landmarks I came to see.

Some info about me.
I am black, 5'8, 200lbs with brown eyes and black hair
I have included a pic so if you are interested send me an email with a pic and I will get back to
you.
P.S.- Hopefully you can see this ad is too detailed to be fake :)
would love to hear from you soon
    do NOT contact me with unsolicited services or offers
post id: 4243346478 posted: 12 days ago

*12/16/13    T    H
Not gay or BI just wanna watch her - mw4m - 25 (Sugar bay)
Not gay or BI just wanna watch her get fucked in the ocean our hotel room anywhere she will
only do this if she's comfortable and drunk. We are staying at sugar bay. Please email me back
only if your 25 to 32 good looking and in shape and have a certain type of charm to you that she
will love. We will be at sugar bay all night long tonight if you wanna come get drunk with us I
will let you know what she is wearing and you can work your magic. Shhh she doesn't know I
posted this keep it on the DL. Your pics get my response.
    Location: Sugar bay
    do NOT contact me with unsolicited services or offers
post id: 4246879842 posted: 10 days ago

*12/17/13    T    H
my last nite on island..going out with a bang - m4m - 26 (in town)
Masculine young male. Fit clean and discrete. Leaving tomorrow. I'm free now. Let's meet up.
You must be a top and send pic.
    Location: in town
    do NOT contact me with unsolicited services or offers
post id: 4248724141 posted: 9 days ago

*12/18/13    T
Looking for fun!!!!! - m4w (Frenchman)
Just in town for two nights and looking for NSA fun with a local or visitor. Im also open to
couples but am straight. Im real and ddf, please you be also. I do have pics to share so send yours
over. Put you favorite color in the subject so I know your real.
    Location: Frenchman
    do NOT contact me with unsolicited services or offers
post id: 4250130108 posted: 8 days ago

*12/18/13    T
Getting lucky? - 28 (St Thomas)
Hey is anyone having any luck on here? New to the area and not too sure what to expect from
Craigslist definitly not as many ads as back in NY lol. I'm a fit white guy, 28 years old, nice
body, nice package, chill attitude, looking to meet up for a few drinks and see where it goes, no
expectations. Just visiting so not looking for anything long term, I'm very open minded so if you
have any ideas please send me a message ;)
    Location: St Thomas
    do NOT contact me with unsolicited services or offers
post id: 4249614074 posted: 8 days ago

*12/21/13    T    H
Bi curious visitor - m4m - 28 (St Thomas)
Hey whats up? I'm a fit white guy visiting from the us, I have a gf but I want to try fooling around
with another guy, maybe swap blow jobs, see if we can fit your cock in my ass if you want to try

Looking for a fit young guy doesn't matter what race but I'd like to see a couple pics, just body and cock is cool for now
Location: St Thomas
do NOT contact me with unsolicited services or offers
post id: 4254191000 posted: 5 days ago

*12/22/13  T  H*
Hey guys
i am a good looking guy, looking for big cocks to drain I luv BBC, absolutely luv draining them. I also luv BWC as well Forty two. Six foot one, two hundred and ten pounds, 7.5c. I host.... No car here. Put "Pick Me"in the subject line to weed out scammers. Hope to hear from you soon. Only can play until 1:00 pm.
Location: Sugar Bay Resort
do NOT contact me with unsolicited services or offers
post id: 4254953304 posted: 4 days ago updated: 4 days ago

12/25/13  F  M
Montana guy coming end of the month - m4w - 21 (St Thomas)
American guy from Montana coming at the end of the month and hoping to find a local girl to email back and forth and hopefully meet up with when I get down there! 21, fit, fun and just looking for someone to have a great vacation with!!! Hopefully this works and I will hear from you soon
Location: St Thomas
do NOT contact me with unsolicited services or offers
post id: 4227142642 posted: 22 days ago updated: 7 hours ago

*12/26/13  T  H*
Couple at ritz Carlton st Thomas for week
Two guys (couple) here looking for masc discreet younger jock or older blue collar type
38- bearded one seventy five 5'9" top
23- furry college dude one sixty five 5'10" vers
hosting- send pics in first email for ours
looking for week of 12/26-1/2
do NOT contact me with unsolicited services or offers
post id: 4259878627 posted: 2 hours ago

*12/29/13  T  H*
Looking for fun/hookup - m4w - 26 (Sapphire Beach)
Hello,
I'm a 28 year old staying at Sapphire Bay with my family on vacation until the 1-2-14. Looking for a nice looking working girl to have a little fun with. Cash is definitely an option. Please respond with pictures, looking for ASAP.
If you are the hot yoga instructor on the beach, even better.
Location: Sapphire Beach
it's ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
post id: 4264297176 posted: 7 days ago
1/1/14 T
Energizer bunny in town til tomorrow couples welcome - m4w - 31 (St Thomas)
I'll be on the island until tomorrow. After a night of drinking I could go forever;). I'm a hot white
guy from the states in town for scuba. Super horny but w friends so can't host. I have a car and
can come to you fast. Looking for no strings couples welcome as long as the dude doesn't touch
me. You won't be disappointed;
  Location: St Thomas
  do NOT contact me with unsolicited services or offers
post id: 4267282779 posted: 5 days ago email to friend best of

1/2/14 T H
Visiting couple, bi friendly wife - mw4mw - 40 (St Thomas)
We are in town for 2 nights
We are at a hotel and can entertain
Wife is very pretty 42 yo
Slim bi friendly
Husband good looks not a model 8. 1/2-3/4 thick cut gentleman 50
Clean discreet drama free
We do not play often!!
  Location: St Thomas
  do NOT contact me with unsolicited services or offers
post id: 4268782824 posted: 3 days ago

1/2/14 T H
We are a fit, attractive, super sexual, and very nice couple, looking to play with another like
minded girl. Visiting St. Thomas...
Clean, STD tested. We do full sharing/kissing/licking, etc. Not jealous at all. Attached are a
couple of our pictures, some of them are from a recording showing us play with girls we met in
the past.
This has to be discreet, and I will send you our face pics ONLY after us girls voice verify. Ask
for my number... bye.
If this post is still up, we are still looking :) We are real.
No guys, no couples, no flakes. Thanks.
NO WEIRDOS PRETENDING TO BE GIRLS EITHER!

1/2/14 T
seeking slim sexy lady - m4w (east end)
good looking slim white male, 42, visit island every few weeks for work.
seeking slim sexy female (any race) for regular discrete meets, got some roses for you.
  Location: east end
  do NOT contact me with unsolicited services or offers
post id: 4268924588 posted: 3 days ago

1/4/14 T
LF FUN - m4w - 19 (St. Johns)
Hey good looking 19 year old wm on vacation not picky so hmu and lets make this happen. Pic 4
pic
  Location: St. Johns
  do NOT contact me with unsolicited services or offers
post id: 4272793401 posted: 3 days ago

1/6/14 F H
mwm looking for discrete fun - m4m - 48 (St. John US Virgin Is.)
g1 48, hairy, good shape, looking for some safe m2m while visiting for 10 days staring 1/10, can
not host. south east part of island
   Location: St. John US Virgin Is.
   do NOT contact me with unsolicited services or offers
post id: 4274668401 posted: a day ago

*1/6/14 T       T       H       
Cock sucker going for a walk this am looking for a hung bi load.... - m4m - 39 (st. john/cruz
bay area)
Staying at a villa up the hill from the main town ...i am a cock sucker looking for a hung bi visitor
to suck his cock and take his load...i cannot host...looking to travel out to you either in your room
or outdoors somewhere...? ddfree and non smoker looking for the same....just be hung white and
bi...if you have a gf that is a huge turn on..she wont suck your cock! I brought some poppers hit
me back now!

*1/9/14 
23 - M - Looking for some fun - m4w - 23 (St. John)
Looking for a lady to have some nsa fun with while on vacation. Will be here until Saturday
night. Send pic via email.
   Location: St. John
   do NOT contact me with unsolicited services or offers
post id: 4280024879 posted: 3 days ago

*1/10/14 T       T       H
just for fun - m4m (STT)
Visiting st. Thomas . I want my first time special.. need a special treat no games . no long email.
hotel or house
   Location: STT
   it's ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
post id: 4280809570 posted: 2 days ago

*1/11/14 
looking for casual encounters while im at st thomas - m4w (St.Thomas)
Dates are not 0stin stone yet but looking to arrive around feb 10th
looking for casual sex while im there for 7 days will consider donating to your
favorite charity , im larry reply for my ph# & email
   Location: St.Thomas
   it's ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests
post id: 4282906735 posted: 22 hours ago

*1/12/14 L
Phsical Exam Needed (St. Thomas)
I am in need of a pre-employment physical exam. I prefer a young, fit, well trained doctor, or one
that can role play. I am 5'11". 8.5" cut, white boy in my late 30's, average looking dude. Hit me
up, I can travel late night to your hotel or apt.
   Location: St. Thomas
   do NOT contact me with unsolicited services or offers
post id: 4283562976 posted: 13 hours ago updated: 13 hours ago

*1/12/14 L
guy who loves a crazy night. - m4w - 26 (red hook st Thomas)
Down for anything. I get off on making you cum. Must be clean orally. hotel or your place is just fine. Let me treat you right. Txt me with a pic. I'm 5'11" 155 lbs std free. Anything else goes seven2zero2sixzerofour223
-jack
Pic for pic. .... anything goes Just txt me and make my night.
   Location: red hook st Thomas
   do NOT contact me with unsolicited services or offers
post id: 4283173242 posted: 19 hours ago updated: 14 hours ago

*1/15/14   F
will be in st thomas jan 19-26th - m4w - 37 (st thomas)
Hi -. I will be on the island for business and pleasure the 19-26th. I am looking for a cool girl to hang with and explore the island. I am a fit, professional gentleman and would like to see where it goes. If you would like more pictures just ask. I hope to hear back.! :)
black hair only....
  Location: bluebeards resort/by town
do NOT contact me with unsolicited services or offers
post id: 4299118131 posted: 7 days ago

***1/22/14 T H
STT on cruise today - 49 (st thomas)
2 guys - gay couple in st thomas today on cruise ship for the day and looking to be hosted for hot
3 way of kissing and mutual cocksucking
bringing 2 big loads with us and want to deposit them in a hot mouth
At Megan's bay
Cum get us
  Location: st thomas
  do NOT contact me with unsolicited services or offers
post id: 4299211899 posted: 7 days ago

*1/22/14 T H
Masculine bi visitor - m4m - 24 (St thomas )
Hey masculine good looking bi guy looking for other good looking fit guys for fun. Can't host.
HIV - you be too. Here traveling for a week. Hit me up.
Location: St Thomas

*1/23/14 T H
any white hung studs up for a blow now.... - m4m (bluebeards resort/)
cock sucker looking for right now....hosting for the next 2 hours....i am looking for a hung white
dude to suck off now in my hotel room....128.....bluebeards resort...hit me up now...three four
zero seven seven four 1600....ask for rm 128....i have poppers...again looking for hung white
studs...now.....ask for david only....
  Location: bluebeards resort/
  do NOT contact me with unsolicited services or offers
post id: 4300691235 posted: 6 days ago updated: 6 days ago email to friend ¶ best of

*1/24/14 T H
Looking for hung stra8 dudes to blow..... - m4m (st thomas/bluebeards...)
Wondering if there are any hung straight white dudes that just want head either to completion or
give me a facial and go? staying at bluebeards resort...had a hot load yesterday and looking for
another...ditch the gf and come get head great cock sucker here....ddfree and no smokers...have
poppers ....hit me back now...
  Location: st thomas/bluebeards...
  do NOT contact me with unsolicited services or offers
post id: 4302210120 posted: 5 days ago

*1/25/14 T H
Asian Visitor here for a week, want to hook up - 36 (St. Thomas)
Anybody interested to hook up with me? Here for the entire week. Wanted to explore the islands
and mess around with someone disease/drug free and who is in for clean hot sex. Body contacts,
massages, making out, exploring secret hiding places, beaches where we can be nude, and stuff
like that. I'm a nice guy, HWP, smooth, fair skin, clean and D/D free. Hit me back with a phone
number so we can make this happen while I'm here. No one older than 50!!please?! Preferably top,
since I'm a versatile bottom. No endless emails please? Hope to hear from you as soon as you can.
  Location: St. Thomas
do NOT contact me with unsolicited services or offers
post id: 4306406148 posted: 2 days ago

*1/28/14  T    H
Fill my ass with cum - m4mm - 21 (St. Thomas)
Im here visiting for a week and want to find horny guys that all want to come over and fill my ass with cum and make me drink it all after. I can host to get the invite please send stats and a pic.
   Location: St. Thomas
do NOT contact me with unsolicited services or offers

*1/31/14  T
I need some company in my hotel room... - m4w - 35 (USVI)
35 year old professional generous white guy here staying in a hotel downtown for a few. I'd love to have some company maybe an hour maybe spend the night who knows? I like all kinds of girls from sexy office types to dirty gangsta types...send me some pics and if I like we will figure out the rest. I'll be waiting!
   Location: USVI
do NOT contact me with unsolicited services or offers
post id: 4303173013 posted: 9 days ago updated: 2 days ago

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>T</th>
<th>TH</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>LH</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>FT</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>July</td>
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T= Heterosexual Tourist Interest
TH= Homosexual Tourist Interest
L= Heterosexual Local Interest
LH= Homosexual Local Interest
F= Heterosexual Future Tourist Interest
FT= Homosexual Future Tourist Interest
Appendix B

Behavior Observation List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local initiated verbal communication</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local observing arrival of tourists via safari, rental car, or van</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local initiating contact by dancing near/behind tourist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local buying drink for tourists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local offering services to a tourist on a beach</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local males displaying athletic abilities on the beach</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local females approaching male tourists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing down or exchanging information by cell</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tourist engaging local on the dance floor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tourist engaging local at the bar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tourist buying drinks for locals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourist and local leave together</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tourist asking for services from a local</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

Interview Guide for Local Sex Providers

1. How often do you think locals have sexual relations with tourists here in St. Thomas?
2. Why do you think tourists want to have sex with locals?
3. Why do you think locals want to have sex with tourists?
4. Why do you do it? What do you gain or get out of it?
5. Describe your typical engagement with a tourist. How do you meet tourists, how do you entice and engage the tourists, and how do you end it?
6. Are there any dis/advantages for you to have sex with tourists? Why or why not?
7. What kind of competition do you face among your peers tourists?
8. Do you use the Internet to meet tourists?
9. Do tourists seek you out for sex? If so, how?
10. Is there anything else you think is relevant to this topic that you can add?
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