



# HIV and STI Prevention for Female Migrant Sex Workers (MSW)

## Challenges, Strategies and Research Needs

### A Qualitative Study with Expert Interviews in Berlin

Claudia Santos-Hövenner  
Master Thesis

Charité, Berlin School of Public Health  
Master Study Program  
Health and Society: International Gender Studies



## Background

- In Germany 86% of sex workers are women
- 60-80% of female sex workers in Germany are migrants
- Increase of women migrating to engage in sex work
- Since the eastward enlargement of the EU, more women from Eastern and Central Europe
- Studies from other countries indicate that MSW at heightened risk for HIV/STIs
- Raising HIV incidence of migrants in Germany

⇒ HIV/STI prevention for MSW is pivotal

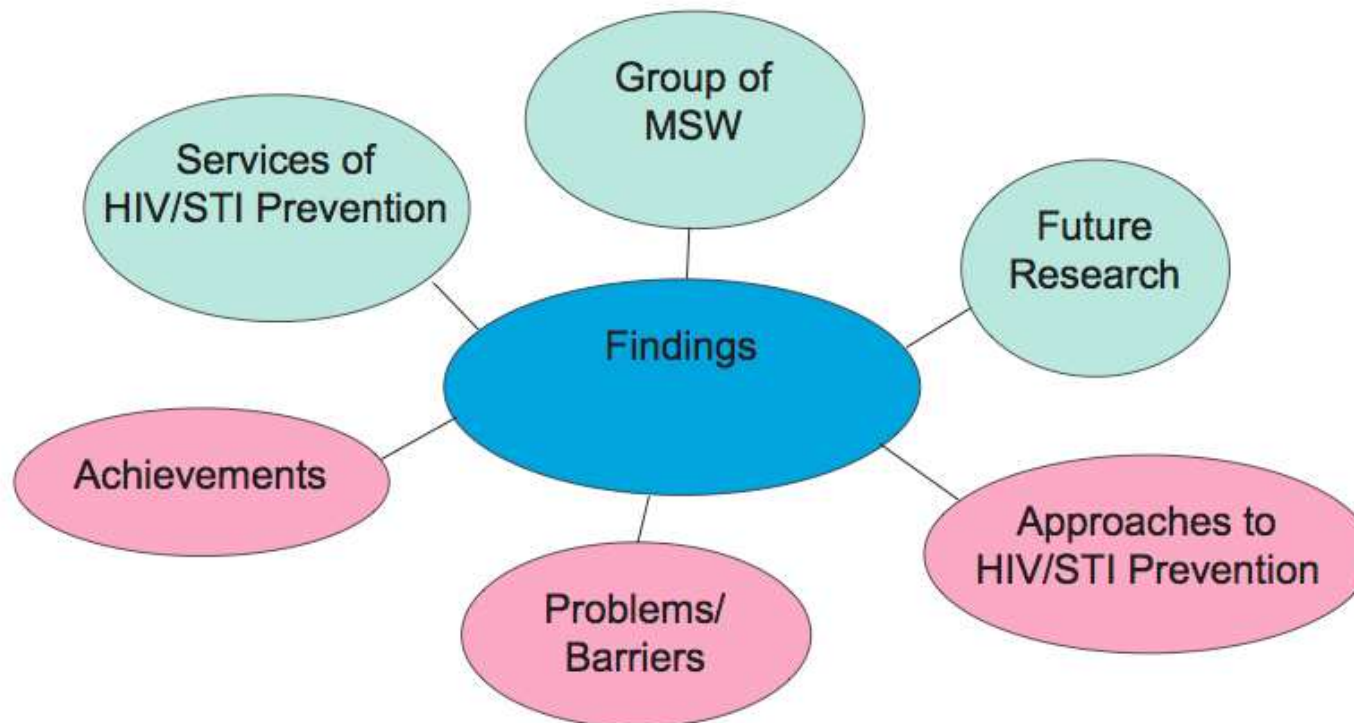
## Research Questions

- What are barriers and achievements for HIV/STI prevention for MSW in Berlin?
- What are potential new approaches to HIV/STI prevention for MSW in Berlin?
- What additional information is needed to plan HIV/STI prevention services for the target group?

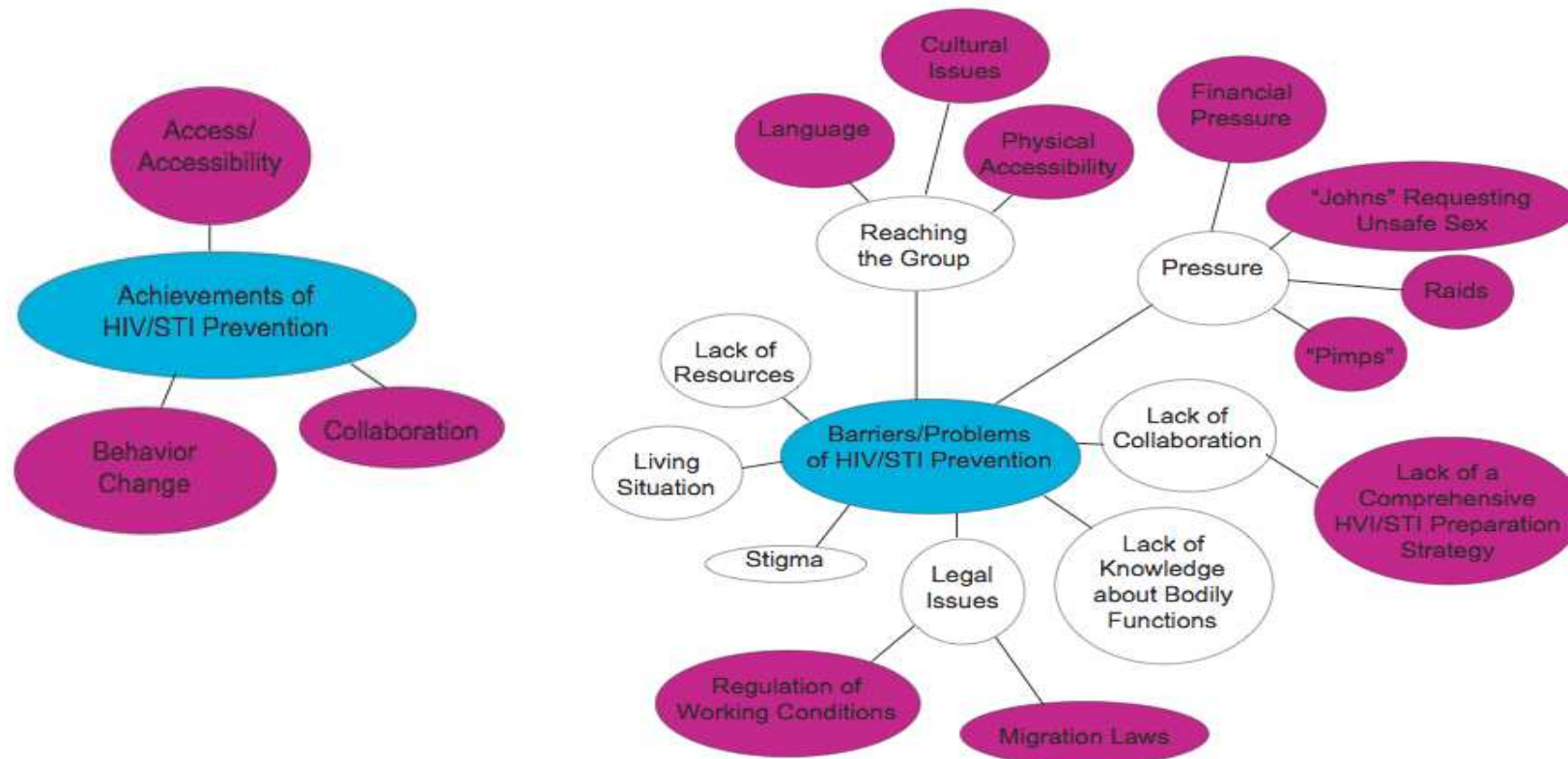
# Methods

- Study Approach: Qualitative, inductive
  - Using semistructured interviews with 12 experts
  
- Data Sources:
  - Partial transcription of interviews
  - Fieldnotes
  
- Data Analysis:
  - Elements of Grounded Theory (Charmaz)
  - Method for analysis of guided interviews (Schmidt)

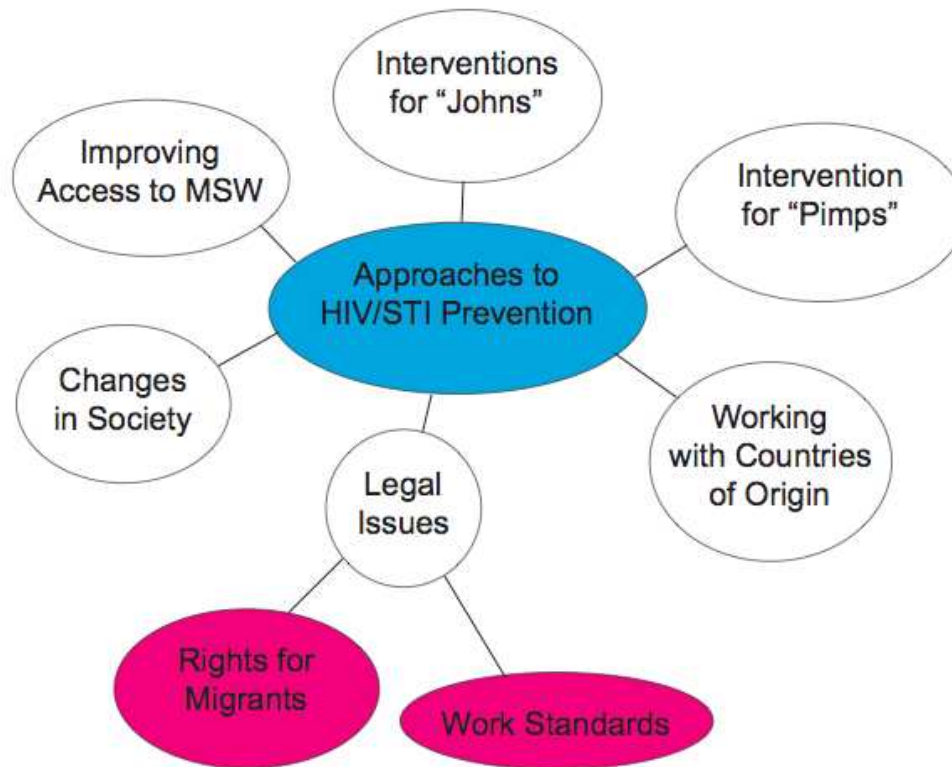
# Findings- Main Themes



# Findings-Achievements and Challenges



# Findings-Approaches



## Discussion

- Focus on street-based sex work even though 80% of sex work in Germany takes place indoors
- New finding
  - Level of sex education in MSW from Central Europe
- Sex Work – a gender issue
- Structural and behavioral/cultural barriers to HIV/STI prevention for MSW
- HIV/STI prevention planning adhering to the model of structural prevention by Etgeton



## Recommendations

- Addressing the underlying issues
- Designing effective HIV/STI prevention strategies
  - Involvement of MSW in HIV/STI prevention
  - Interventions for “johns”
- Increase of collaboration on national and international level
- Continuous advocacy for the rights of MSW and sex workers in general
- Further research

Thank you very much for  
your attention and interest!

Claudia Santos-Hövenner, MSc (Public Health)  
Robert Koch Institute, Berlin  
[Santos-HoevernerC@rki.de](mailto:Santos-HoevernerC@rki.de)

