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**Paying for Sex:
A socio-cultural exploration of
men who engage in sexual
commerce**

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Abstract

This thesis presents a sociological account of men who pay for sex through the lens of relationships and sexuality. By addressing the traditional absence of male clients within research on the sex industry, it aims, first, to move research away from moralistic discourses and simplistic motivational accounts, and towards an analysis of the *social context* of paying for sex, in which both sexual commerce and the wider intimate sphere have changed. Second, exploring this social context, focusing on relationships and sexuality, it attends to the broader cultural formations of heterosexual male identities in contemporary sexual culture.

Thirty five male clients of female sex workers were recruited using an internet message board and a local newspaper. Interviews were conducted either; face-to-face, over the phone or using MSN. Overall, I argue that paying for sex needs to be understood within the context of being a heterosexual man in contemporary sexual culture. Recognition of the social and cultural environments in which men perform their multiple identities draws attention to the interactional nature of identity, the influence of resources from the wider environment when crossing and maintaining identity boundaries, and the management strategies of conflicting identities. By exploring commercial sex as a heterosexual practice, experience and identity, which transitions over time, I argue that commercial sex allows men to sidestep the 'bargain', 'burden' and 'mundane' elements of non-commercial heterosexual life. Yet, paradoxically, these elements seep across the non-commercial / commercial boundary,

challenging discourses that place them in opposition. Finally I propose an alternative view of gendered power relations, emphasising the contextual and fluid nature of power which is dependent on resources available to either party. However, despite the traditionally male domain of rational thought, which initially appears to allow men to take part in commercial sex, exercising power in this way can bear a cost in terms of emotional fall-out, a disrupted masculine identity and a spoiled identity.

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Preface

Given the proliferation of forms of commercial sex, the scarcity of research – except on ‘prostitution’ - is remarkable. The focus is usually on personal motivations, the morality of the buying-and-selling relationship, stigma, violence and disease prevention. Questions of desire and love are usually sidelined; relationships are rarely contextualised culturally or conceived as complex; concrete sexual issues are hardly dealt with. Commercial sex is usually ... treated only as a moral issue [neglecting to acknowledge] the complex socio-cultural contexts where the meaning of buying and selling sex is not always the same

(Agustin, 2007: 403).

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Aims, Objectives and Research Questions

Responding to Agustin’s call for research concerning the sex industry¹ that addresses the complexities of relationships and sexuality, this thesis presents a sociological account of men who pay for sex seen through the lens of relationships and sexuality. It aims, first, to move commercial sex research, away from hegemonic moralistic discourses and two-dimensional motivational accounts, and towards an analysis of the *social context* of paying for sex, in which both sexual commerce and the intimate sphere of wider society have changed. Second, exploring this social context, focusing on relationships and sexuality, it attends to the broader cultural formations of heterosexual male identities in contemporary sexual culture. Its objectives are to examine the commercial and non-commercial relationship experiences and sexual lives of men who pay for sex, before, during (and at times after) their involvement in commercial sex. Challenging the notion that commercial and non-commercial experiences exist in separate spheres, the parallels, dichotomies and leakage, between these commercial and non-commercial experiences will be explored.

My approach generates the following research questions:

1. What can researching men who pay for sex tell us about being a man in wider society?

¹ Chapter 2 will include a fuller discussion on the language and terminology chosen especially the sex worker/ prostitute binary.

2. To what extent can research on men who pay for sex tell us about the cultural formations of masculine identity and the contention that men perform multiple identities which they construct through identification in relation to other people and by drawing on social and material resources?
3. If identities are fluid, what kind of maintenance and crossing of their identity boundaries, might men's transition into paid-for sex involve?
4. Rejecting universalising models of heterosexuality, how are heterosexual identities formulated across the life course? To what extent does the fluidity and multiplicity of heterosexuality challenge the dichotomy of commercial and non-commercial worlds?

In addressing these questions, I explore heterosexuality through male heterosexual experience, utilizing notions of heterosexuality as institution, identity, experience and practice (Jackson, 1996). Thus, I offer a framework in which men experience and practice heterosexuality across the life course, drawing on notions of heterosexuality as involving a bargain, as a burden² and as located in the mundane. It is through a 'rational management' discourse (Jackson and Scott, 1997), which emphasises the individual pursuit of pleasure, that men are able to make the decision to pay for sex and attempt to control their involvement. Whilst the attraction of commercial sex seems to reflect men's difficulties with non-commercial sex, my data reveal, in what I term a *paradox of payment*, parallels between the emotional and social processes that

² The terms bargain and burden were used by two participants to describe their experiences of their non-commercial lives. I have taken these terms and used them analytically to explain the experiences of the men in my sample.

men engage in during commercial and non-commercial sexual involvement. Reflecting my concern with heterosexuality and masculinity as identity categories, I attend to transitions within both commercial and non-commercial relationships, showing the fluidity of men's relationships.

Finally, in recognising shifts in commercial sex markets, especially with the rise of the internet and a shift towards sex work as a middle class leisure pursuit, I propose an alternative approach to power relations between sex workers and clients, challenging arguments that all sex work is inherently oppressive and the ultimate signifier of male dominance. Whilst I acknowledge oppression and exploitation, these issues are considered in participants' reflective accounts of their hopes, desires, disappointments and fears, and their constructions of their sexual and related relationships, both commercial and non-commercial.

Rationale

- Male Client Invisibility

Until the 1990s there was only limited sociological and criminological research about commercial sex, and men were relatively absent from commercial sex debates. Until recently, most work focused on female sex workers, particularly street based prostitution, drug abuse, reasons for entry and social background (Hester and Westmarland, 2004; May *et al.*, 1999; O'Connell Davidson, 2003; O'Neill, 1996; Phoenix, 2000).

Male clients of female sex workers are currently high on social and political agendas in the UK, due to the government overhaul of the laws regarding clients, and also the murders of five sex workers in Ipswich during 2006. Furthermore, global, social and political pressures, related to an increase at international and national levels of concerns about trafficking and the expansion of the global sex industry, have led to calls for the inclusion of male clients in research. For example, Hughes suggests we must “consider men’s responsibility for the existence and continuation of commercial sex, how they create the existence and continuation of commercial sex, and how they create the demand for women” (2004: 6). Reasons for the invisibility of men include: the double standard in which *deviant* women are blamed for *normal* men’s involvement in deviant sexual liaisons; the assumption that men are responding to a natural urge which warrants no explanation; and difficulties with research access due to the hidden, stigmatised nature of their activities (Sanders, 2008a; Weitzer, 2000). Despite radical feminist calls to include clients, such as from Hughes, (2004), there are other reasons why clients should no longer remain invisible.

The transformation of the industry since 2000, means that the image of the ‘street prostitute’ touting for business on dark street corners is no longer representative. Much knowledge about the sex industry, and about wider transformations of economic, intimate and cultural life, is out of date (Bernstein, 2007). Excluding male clients marginalises an already stigmatised and under researched population and silences the men involved. Social and political debates draw on stereotypical and inaccurate representations of clients

from the media, and not empirical evidence. Consequently, policy, including health initiatives and discourse about the regulation of sexuality and sexual behaviour, is based upon inaccurate and unsubstantiated claims (Sanders, 2008a). For Earle and Sharp (2008b) excluding men from research on sex work constructs them as dangerous and further focuses the problems of the industry on the women who sell sex, thus upholding the double standard.

- Including Clients

Recently, however, a growing body of work has examined men's engagement in paid-for sex, focusing on client motivation, client characteristics, and client violence against women (Kinnell, 2006; Lowan and Atchinson, 2006; McKeganey and Barnard, 1996; Monto, 1999). Street prostitution has however, remained the site of study, despite Brents and Hausbeck's claim that this dark, isolated world is being replaced, in some instances, by "large, glitzy, and upscale adult stores and gentleman's clubs, many with upscale restaurants" (2007: 427). There is, however, some recognition of the spectrum of commercial sex locations (see Sanders, 2005a, 2008a). This work examines issues such as the mixing of commerce and intimacy (Bernstein, 2007), the rise of the 'girl friend experience'³ (Earle and Sharp, 2008a), and client emotional involvement (Sanders, 2008a, 2008b). However, despite these advances, and the fact that much research is qualitative, there is still a lack of actual men's voices in the literature, with research on male clients reflecting sex workers' views (Lever and Dolnick; 2000), or police records, for quantitative research

³ This term will be explained more fully in Chapter 2.

(Matthews, 1993), or material from commercial sex websites⁴ (Holt and Blevins, 2007). This lack of men's voices is a pervasive theme throughout the masculinities literature with Gough arguing that work on " 'masculinities' has produced many insightful theoretical and cultural analyses, yet, apart from a few notable exceptions, very little work has analysed the things men say" (2001: 169). Consequently, knowledge of male sexuality and of practices such as commercial sex is limited, which impacts on our theoretical understandings of male heterosexuality.

Including Myself

My interest in the commercial sex industry began when I read *The Natashas* by Victor Malarek (2002), an investigative journalist who tackled the global trade of human trafficking for sexual exploitation. From this I developed a strong interest in human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation and considered basing my Masters dissertation on the topic. I was, however, informed that it would be particularly difficult to undertake such a project at Masters level. I kept with the theme of commercial sex and upon reading around about sex work, as well as being struck by the glaring neglect of male clients in both theoretical and empirical literature, my initial response, especially as my interest developed from human trafficking, was to ask how: could anybody do that, and why would they want to? So as I continued my journey into the commercial sex literature more broadly, this curiosity, coupled with shock, made me aware that although there are two people (and probably

⁴ These websites will be explained more fully in Chapter 2.

more, see Agustin, 2005) involved in each commercial sex transaction, only one participant had been scrutinised, probed, stigmatised, sanctioned and exposed. So I began with a desire to expose men who paid for sex as participants in an exploitative patriarchal system, one in which paid-for sex could only be understood as exploitation, domination and subordination⁵. This is where I decided to focus my Masters dissertation. Yet, again, I was advised that this was not possible at Masters level, so I altered the project to focus on police opinions of street-based prostitution (Hammond, 2005). Despite this, I was encouraged to believe that my ideas would make a great PhD project.

I have never worked in the sex industry and my only previous connection with it was a result of my Masters research, as well as two visits to strip clubs as a student. Therefore, I had little first-hand knowledge or experience of sex work. However, after my Masters degree, I began to recognise that the gap in knowledge surrounding male clients was beginning to be addressed in work on motivations, attempts to measure prevalence, levels of violence, discussion of demographics, and the differences between street and off-street locations (Atchinson *et al.*, 1998; Hoigard and Finstad, 1992; Lever and Dolnick, 2000; McKeganey and Barnard, 1996; Mansson, 2001; McLeod, 1982; Monto, 1999; Ward *et al.*, 2005). The research focus was also starting to alter, with the recognition of different markets attracting different clients, and global transformations of the sex industry and sexual culture. Rather than street locations, work has begun to explore the relationships between sex worker and client, intimacy, and pleasure, especially in indoor markets (Allison, 1994;

⁵ For a similar starting position and transformation see Hart (1998).

Bernstein, 2001, 2005; Hart, 1998; Sharpe and Earle, 2003⁶). Yet, at the start of my PhD I was still interested in the more exploitative end of the industry.

However, I then began to recognise that whilst these conditions did exist and may be the case in the context of women, children and men who have been trafficked, to associate all sex work with these conditions, and subsume it under these types of relationships, was inaccurate, unrepresentative and naïve.

Alongside exploring this newer literature I began observing commercial sex message boards, such as PunterNet, and it quickly became apparent that on these sites discussing street prostitution and the desire for trafficked women was not acceptable. Instead the members of the boards steered towards consensual, business-orientated encounters. Thus a shift in my knowledge of the sex industry brought a change in the focus of my research.

Parallel to this shift in my research interests the social and cultural dimensions of sexual commerce became a focus for ethnographic work, such as that of Allison (1994), Bernstein (2005) and Hart (1998). This new direction reflected the context in which sex was bought and sold. Following these ethnographic leads, coupled with Agustin's (2005) call, quoted earlier, I began seeking a *different* focus for my research: I wanted to explore the *social* context of men's involvement in paid-for sex. This, for me, suggested asking questions about men's social environment. Allison's (1994) exploration of commercial sex

⁶ Whilst I have been doing my PhD more literature has been published, such as Bernstein (2007), Blevins and Holt (2009), Holt and Blevins (2007) and Sanders (2008a, 2008b), which has influenced the research process and analysis. Sanders (2008a, 2008b) work has been especially influential throughout my project, although, when I was framing my research focus, developing interviews and conducting some interviews it had not yet been published. As such, her work did not have a bearing on my initial focus, yet it has informed my analysis significantly.

through the lens of work and 'play' and corporate masculine practices in hostess clubs in Japan, and Hart's (1998) focus on the interactions between sex workers and clients in Spain offered analyses of the relationships men had with sex workers, and how hegemonic discourse constructed not only identities but also the formation of counter identities. This work located paying for sex firmly within social contexts. However, this new work neglected to ask who the men were outside of the commercial sex context. Whilst Allison (1994) discusses issues of work and play, thus locating paid-for sex as part of the wider aspects of these men's lives, there is little *historical* analysis of men's lives. This recognition was, for me, one starting place: men who pay for sex belong to broader social worlds. However, it was not enough just to say I wished to explore the commercial and non-commercial lives of men. What exactly about their commercial and non-commercial lives was potentially telling? Which social aspects was I interested in?

However the exchange of money for sex is understood, whether as violence against all women, or as a romantic encounter and a gift of money, the reason that such an interaction takes place between a man and a woman is always based on one factor, sex. This may be contentious as sex 'work' proponents argue vigorously that there is much more than *just* sex involved. There is emotionality (perhaps as the outcome of labour: Hochschild, 1983), intimacy (which may be illusory), conversation (sometimes scripted), friendship (at times genuine), and pleasure (perhaps reciprocal). Yet however it is defined, as sex work, commercial sex, paid-for sex, prostitution, or paid-for intimacy, there is no escaping the 'sex' element. That said, when engaging in a sexual encounter

with another person there is more than just the bodily mechanics, and heterosexuality involves a more than just sex (Jackson, 1995; Hockey *et al.*, 2008). Whilst previous studies have explored themes surrounding sex such as motivations, sexual health and disease prevalence, and internet facilitation of paid for sex (McKeganey and Barnard, 1996; Sharp and Earle, 2003; Ward *et al.*, 2005; Xantidis and McCabe, 2000), few authors have explored the fact that commercial sex is a way of *relating*, however temporary and fleeting that relationship may be. Bernstein (2001, 2005) and Lever and Dolnick (2000) discussing intimacy only partly addresses this issue in off-street locations⁷.

From reviewing this literature two parallel themes emerged as gaps: first the biographies and histories of men who pay for sex and their lives beyond the bounded commercial sex encounter, and second, the commercial and non-commercial relationship and sexual experiences of men who pay for sex. I recognised that men who engage in commercial sex are *men* who perform a masculine heterosexual identity outside commercial sex, both before and after their involvement in paid-for sex. I wanted to bring together these ideas by conducting a sociological inquiry into men's involvement in paid-for sex as a (perhaps temporary) relationship, and to locate this practice within the context of men's other relationships and experiences of heterosexuality in wider society. This led me to ask questions about the commercial and non-commercial relationships and sexual experiences of men who pay for sex, focusing on five broad areas: industry involvement, sexual relationships, sex

⁷ It is acknowledged that Hart (1998) addresses issues of love and friendship, however, the location and context of her work (in a poor Spanish area, where business would be procured on the streets) is significantly different to the context of where I thought my work would be located, nonetheless her findings have been insightful, as will be described in Chapter 2.

and sexuality, intimacy, and the wider sex industry. I wanted to know how these men had experienced being heterosexual *throughout their lives*, alongside being men who pay for sex. Consequently, as well as addressing gaps in the literature surrounding commercial sex this thesis also contributes to the theorisation of masculinities and heterosexuality.

Understanding Men who Pay for Sex

The recognition that male clients are not isolated within the commercial sex encounter and exist, as men, in non-commercial contexts, gives this thesis a dual purpose: contributing to research on the sex industry as well as heterosexuality and masculinity more broadly. Paralleling men's inclusion into commercial sex research, research attention has turned to men in general, with a wealth of literature covering men's health, sexuality and friendships, men's relation to violence, crime and work (see Schrock and Schwalbe, 2009). But what does being a man entail? Conventionally, men are supposed to regulate emotional displays, be attracted to women, be economically successful, independent, sexually successful, and symbolise power, rationality and assertiveness (Schrock and Schwalbe, 2009; Segal, 2007; Seidler, 1992). Schrock and Schwalbe (2009) argue that gender - masculinity - should not be seen as an attribute, but as cultural practices, and they call for an exploration of men's practices, both individual and collective, Connell further argues that masculinity must not be seen as an object, instead the "processes and relationships through which men and women conduct gendered lives" should be the focus (2005: 71). Despite conceptual difficulties pertaining to masculinity,

Connell argues that masculinity “is simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture (2005: 71). Connell draws on hegemonic discourses of masculinity to address diversity and plurality, within the notion that although men as a group dominate, not all men are dominant, as will be explored in more detail in Chapter 3.

Robinson (2008), acknowledges this diversity and calls attention to “how men exist in different spaces, sometimes simultaneously and at various stages of the life course and how they manage transitions between work and home life, between being a colleague, friend, father and partner” in order to demonstrate how both identities and relationships may shift (2008: 37). Despite recognising this diversity and plurality of masculinities, Schrock and Schwalbe (2009) claim that this can mask what men have in common, what constitutes a ‘masculine self’ must be explored. I address both Robinson’s element of transition and Schrock and Schwalbe’s call for interrogation of a masculine self in my thesis, as reflected in my research questions, above. In a bid to understand engagement in paid-for sex, it is necessary to locate the men involved within the context of broader theories of heterosexuality and masculinity and how these are played out and negotiated within gendered relationships more broadly. By exploring the context of how these men experience, understand and live out heterosexuality and masculinity in their daily lives and through their relationships with women (and other men) – their practices and experiences - my work speaks to both their commercial and non-

commercial relationships and thus identities. In order to theorise men's involvement in paid for sex and to locate this in wider understandings of being a heterosexual male in contemporary society, I draw on three theoretical concepts: identity, transitional relationships, and power.

- Identity

Identity has been a popular topic within research into commercial sex concerning both sex workers and clients (Brewis and Linstead, 2000a; Sanders, 2005a, 2008b; Vanwesenbeeck, 2001) particularly the concept of 'stigma' (Goffman, 1968). The 'deviant' client is analysed as pathologically disturbed. However, newer work on identity, especially within the context of exotic dancing, has discussed the relational aspect, performance, and validation of identity (Frank, 1998; Egan, 2005; Murphy, 2003). In addition, the performance of identity online has been discussed (Blevins and Holt, 2009; Katsulis, 2009; Sanders, 2008a; Williams *et al.*, 2008). What is apparent in this literature, and my data, are particular processes of identification which men who pay for sex engage in, and the hegemonic discourses that are drawn upon or resisted in constructing themselves as similar or different to others through gendered, masculine or embodied characteristics, requiring performance and validation (Goffman, 1959; Jenkins, 2008; Woodward, 1997). Thus the relational aspect of identity is emphasised in this work, together with the fluidity of identity. The data I present also explore the ability to cross boundaries during processes of identification, via the social and cultural context and resources available to the men (Lamont and Molnar, 2002). Whilst the men

may inhabit a stigmatised identity, of being a 'client', they also inhabit other identities such as being a man, being a husband, being older. I seek to explore these intersections and demonstrate the conflicts between identities and the resultant management strategies (Goffman, 1968, Lawler, 2008; Link and Phelan, 2002). I argue that men who pay for sex inhabit multiple identities that are constructed in relations with others through social and cultural contexts which are in a state of flux.

- Transitions, Relationships and heterosexuality

As argued, relationships are at the heart of my thesis, an aspect of identity which has been neglected in much previous research on sex work. Following Allison's lead I sought not simply to document sexist male attitudes, but instead to explore a "masculinist behaviour in terms of its historical, institutional and ideological background" (1994: 30). Contemporary work, as discussed, has explored this, incorporating notions of intimacy, emotionality and relationality, yet there is an absence of naming men's involvement in commercial sex explicitly as a *heterosexual practice*. However, the notion that there has been a 'transformation of intimacy' (Giddens, 1992; Jamieson, 1998) has been drawn upon to explore paid-for sex as a life style choice of middle-class men (Sanders, 2008a), along with a discourse pertaining to *emotionality* including issues of intimacy, romance and courtship rituals (Bernstein, 2007; Lever and Dolnick, 2000; Earle and Sharp, 2008a). Making sense of men's narratives within shifting non-commercial and commercial sexual cultures, locates my work within Hawkes' (1996) 'liberalization of heterosexuality' and within discourses

of intimacy, friendship and emotionality pertaining to heterosexual experience (Allan, 1998; Jamieson, 1998; Pahl and Spencer, 2003; Walker, 1994). The accounts of men in my study describe why the men had returned (or not) to particular sex workers, detail their encounters, such as the mundane sharing a brew 'off the clock', in-depth conversations offering support and guidance, online conversations, and offline social events. When data describing these spheres were set alongside those which described men's non-commercial worlds I began to understand the overlap and seepages between their commercial and non-commercial worlds, and the management strategies that people used to confine and conceal their commercial activities and the consequences of inadequate concealment. The intersections of the mundane and extreme began to be clear (Robinson, 2008). The risks to non-commercial identities and relationships are explored, as well as the process of balancing those risks against the gains.

- Power

Perhaps the most contentious issue in commercial sex, the power dynamic which links sex worker and client has been fiercely debated by feminists in the context of power as an extreme example of oppressive relationships between men and women (Farley, 2004; Jeffreys, 1997). However, these debates have become somewhat stagnant and do not take into account the changing nature of sexual life and sexual commerce. I follow O'Connell Davidson's (1998) lead, arguing that power in commercial sex is complicated proposing that power in commercial sex is not held by one party. It is *negotiated* and, like aspects of

identity and relationships, it is fluid and can move across boundaries, following a Foucauldian perspective. That said, I argue that this movement is dependent on access to resources (Jenkins, 2009).

The Wider Social and Political Environment

Before I conclude this chapter by laying out the structure of this thesis, it is important to consider the environment and context in which this research took place, since this environment shaped the data gathered, as will be explored in subsequent chapters. Alongside a changing sex industry and the emergence of new forms of heterosexual relatedness, two important events need to be recognised as part of the context for this project: the murder of five sex workers in Ipswich in 2006 and a Government legal review ‘Tackling the Demand’ (Home Office, 2008). The government review, which will be explained more thoroughly in Chapter 2, began from the premise that sex work was inherently violence against women and that male clients were to blame. Consequently, political opinion suggested that there should be a full ban on paying for sex⁸. Both of these events constructed male clients as potentially violent, dangerous men (Kinnell, 2008; Sanders and Campbell, 2009). There was little public acknowledgment either of the spectrum of the industry or the diverse nature of male clients.

Thus, my research was conducted during a time when paying for sex was the focus of negative public debate, scrutiny and stigma. These narrow constructions were present in the media and in politics, as well as the views of

⁸ For a more detailed critique of the review see Sanders and Campbell (2009).

people in my life. While I have been surrounded by supportive people throughout the project, there has been a lack of understanding or knowledge of my work. Indeed popular representations of clients raised concerns amongst my friends and family, as well as within the university. This *fear* of clients from other people became particularly evident whilst I was arranging a public space in which to conduct interviews, and stereotypical assumptions about commercial sex were frequently expressed by those around me. Comments such as ‘Natalie’s doing a PhD in *prostitution*’ followed by laughing were common during the initial stages, as well as difficulty in recognising that someone would want to work in this area, or understanding why anybody would want to talk with ‘the *perverts*’, as male clients were frequently termed.⁹

Outline of Thesis

Chapter 2 opens this thesis and reviews the literature on the sex industry and male clients, providing a discussion of feminist arguments of how sex ‘work’ / ‘prostitution’ can be understood. It moves on to examine global shifts in sexual commerce and what is known about male clients, arguing that there has been a shift in research focus from pathological and deviant discourses to more socially and culturally situated analyses. The latter incorporates issues of intimacy, emotions, pleasure, fantasy, leisure, friendship and commerce, all of which feature within the data presented here. However, I also argue that this shift has not been reflected in political debates.

⁹ This will all be returned to in Chapter 4 where a fuller methodological reflexive discussion will take place.

Chapter 3 sets out my theoretical frameworks, including the main areas of identity, transitions, relationships and heterosexuality, and power. It opens with a discussion of the construction of identities, including notions of reflexivity, performance and validation. Their fluidity and boundaries including management strategies pertaining to conflicting identities are explored, with a focus on notions of similarity and difference. Following this, debates on power are discussed, starting with an initial overview of relevant social science theories of power. These are framed and located within gendered power relations drawing on feminist debates. Finally, the discussion moves closer to the level of my data and an introduction to feminist concerns with heterosexuality lays out key issues. These are then located in the shifting sexual landscape and men's experiences of relationships surrounding emotions, friendships and shifts across the life course, highlighting transitions pertaining to understandings and experiences and the resultant negotiations and challenges that men face.

Chapter 4 documents the methodological processes, challenges and reflexivity that this project needed to be successful. I outline the interpretive epistemological approach that allowed me to generate and interpret the empirical data. I document my research agenda, access and recruitment procedures, safety and ethical issues and data collection techniques. By providing a reflexive account that explores the emotional dimensions of my position relative to participants, I offer an open and rigorous account of the data collection and analysis processes. I also introduce the thirty-five men who took part in my study.

Chapter 5 launches my interpretation of the data I gathered, exploring how clients construct identities as heterosexual men, both in commercial and non-commercial contexts. The notion of boundaries between identities is central in demonstrating the fluid processes of identification. Thus, the social and emotional nature of boundary crossing, (Lamont and Molnar, 2002) is emphasised, via the resources men used in different social and cultural contexts. It also explores the maintenance of a stigmatised identity and how the boundaries which constitute men's everyday lives are negotiated.

Chapter 6 documents the heterosexual lives and relationships of men who pay for sex from their early years, including how they learnt about sex and experienced relationships, drawing particularly on Hawkes' (1996) liberalisation thesis. Non-commercial sex lives prior to commercial sex involvement and the transitions in and through commercial sex worlds are explored by locating heterosexuality as a male experience approaching male heterosexuality for the men as 'a bargain', 'a burden' and part of mundane life, highlighting how men's responses to these dimensions of heterosexuality was part of a rational management discourse.

Chapter 7 explores the power relations between sex workers and clients from the client perspective, locating contemporary sex work within a shifting sexual culture and highlighting the fluid and mobile nature of power and how the transformations of the industry have altered power relations within commercial sex. Drawing on a Foucauldian analysis, which emphasises the power of discourse, it demonstrates how men who pay for sex reveal awareness of both

abolitionist and sex 'work' discourses, to acknowledge the power relations within sex work. Coupling this Foucauldian perspective with Jenkins' (2009) notion of resources, and differential access to resources, my data show power is exercised and circulates - and what the cost of exercising power can be. The majority of this chapter is located at the micro level; however a discussion of macro-level power relations closes my analysis.

Chapter 8 brings the above arguments together and demonstrates how empirical exploration of engagement in paid-for sex tells us as much about being a man in wider society as it does about paying for sex. This chapter is split into four main areas. First the empirical conclusions about paying for sex are drawn together. Second the contribution to heterosexual theorising and the intersections with other theoretical frameworks are outlined. Third, I detail key points that speak to policy communities. To conclude, I present an agenda for going forward concerning further research of both sexual commerce and heterosexuality more broadly.

Conclusion

This chapter has laid out my research rationale and direction describing the focus and aims of this thesis and where it is theoretically grounded. The following chapter discusses the literature on the commercial sex industry and what we know about male clients, emphasising the new direction that sex work research is taking to include social and cultural analysis of sexual commerce.

Chapter 2 – Studies on Commercial Sex: Past and Present

This chapter opens the thesis by reviewing the relevant existing literature surrounding sexual commerce. It details the shifts in commercial sex research and what we know about those involved. It opens with a discussion of feminist debates concerning how commercial sex is understood, moving on to explore the shifting landscape of sexual commerce and then to what we know about male clients. In doing so, it draws upon newer literature that explores client / sex worker relations and recognises the complexities of paying for sex, a shift away from hegemonic discourse located within street markets pertaining to violence, danger and disease, towards a nuanced understanding located in discourses of emotion, intimacy and friendship. This chapter thus explores both empirical and theoretical work within the specific context of sexual commerce, and when coupled with Chapter 3's review of the sociological theoretical tools - identity, transitions relationships and heterosexuality, and power - allows me to outline the theoretical framework I have used to make sense of my data.

Commercial sex industries have boomed for various reasons, including changes in the wider sphere of intimacy and sexual life and the increase in divorce and decrease in marriage rates (Weeks, 2000; Weitzer, 2009). Globalisation and advances in technology mean that travelling for sex (and in general) is now cheaper and easier; in addition the internet has altered the commercial sex landscape, with advertising, communication, reach and diversity increasing exponentially (Sanders, 2008a). This is coupled with increased acceptance of sexual diversity and an easing of sexual moralising, with sex being used to sell

everything and a trip to a lap dancing club seen as legitimate entertainment – yet there is still marked condemnation of extramarital relations. Historically, however, most commercial sex research has been concerned with women who sell sex, rendering their male clients invisible. This is beginning to change, parallel to transformations within the wider sex industry; issues which this chapter addresses.

Language and Definitions

Despite ambiguities and sweeping generalisations regarding basic definitions within the commercial sex industry (Agustin, 2005; Weitzer, 2000) *sex work* refers to “commercial sexual services, performances and products given in exchange for material compensation” and the *sex industry* signifies “the organizations, owners, managers, and workers involved in commercial sex enterprises” (Weitzer, 2000: 3). O’Connell Davidson (1995) highlights flaws in previous definitions which focus on a single act (selling sex), a limited set of relationships, and a narrow range of activities. These flaws generate a form of ‘closure’ meaning that commercial sex is seen as simply an exchange of sex for cash. Whilst this is an essential element, it occurs within the context of a multitude of relationships and activities.

Previously, the exchange of money for sex came under the remit of ‘prostitution’, and images of scantily clad, drug-dependant women hustling for business on dark street corners, dominated representations and understandings in popular and political discourse (Bernstein, 2007). As such, commercial sex was understood to be the exchange of a sexual service for money or drugs.

However, the sex industry is now understood to encompass a variety of activities, products and services such as pornography, erotic dancing, stripping, telephone sex, live sex shows, sex tourism, and sex toys. Moreover, it is located across multiple sites, including bars, call-centres, privately owned houses, restaurants, flats, sex shops, brothels, over the internet, and in whole districts of cities. The typical female sex worker / male client relationship of sexual commerce has also been extended and there is now the recognition that sexual consumers include men who have sex with men (Whowell, 2010), couples (Brents and Hausbeck, 2007), female clients of male sex workers, especially within the context of sex tourism (Jacobs, 2009), and clients of transgender and transvestite sex workers, whether deliberately sought out or not (Grenz, 2005; Simic and Rhodes, 2009). However, for the purpose of this thesis, the commercial sex encounter explored is a direct¹⁰ meeting between a *male client* of a *female sex worker*¹¹, both engaging in *consensual* sexual commerce. I use the term *sex work*¹² to signify the sale or consumption of sexual services (and whatever else maybe involved) in exchange for money. Underage or trafficked people involved in the sex industry, whilst mentioned by the participants in the study, did not feature in men's activities as described in interviews. Thus, exploitative and non-consensual activities do *not* form the central body of this thesis or analysis. My work is distanced from abolitionist perspectives,

¹⁰ I am utilising direct here to distinguish between those interactions which may not involve a direct meeting or direct contact, such as sex phone lines. However, research pertaining to exotic dance, which may or may not involve direct sexual contact is drawn upon and when this occurs I make this clear.

¹¹ I use the term sex worker to indicate those who provide sexual services and choose this term to highlight the agency, labour and skills of those involved in the sex industry.

¹² I use the terms paid-for sex, sexual commerce, sex work and commercial sex interchangeably for variety and to avoid repetition.

elaborated on below; as I feel that their focus on dominance and oppression is too narrow, failing to address the diversity of men and their practices.¹³

Feminist Debates

Feminism and prostitution¹⁴ / commercial sex have a long and contentious relationship, with Phoenix (1995) arguing that feminist debates surrounding prostitution focus predominantly on issues such as control, consent and coercion. Intense disputes have arisen between what O'Connell Davidson (2002) terms 'sex work'¹⁵ and 'abolitionist' factions in which the former understand prostitution as work, with the recognition that many women enter the industry without coercion and for economic reasons. This faction therefore argues that the women should have access to the same legal and political protection as other workers. In contrast, the abolitionist group see prostitution as the ultimate expression of men's dominance over women, exercised through sexuality (Scoular, 2004) which as long as it continues will contribute to the wider oppression of women (Jeffreys, 1997). Generally, these two perspectives focus on the experiences of women or abstract theorising, and men's accounts of their experiences, as Gough (2001) argues more commonly, are absent.

¹³ My own position is more towards a sex 'work' perspective. I do not deny exploitation and violence exist in sexual commerce, but I do think there is great deal of diversification between those involved in the sex industry, which must be recognised in order to successfully contribute to, and move forward sex work research. However, I am wary of some sex 'work' positions which again neglect diversity and romanticise sex work and I follow O'Connell Davidson (1998) and think that it is more complicated than either camp convey.

¹⁴ The term prostitution is used within this section of the chapter where it is the language used by the authors whose work I review.

¹⁵ I will refer to this perspective as sex 'work' to distinguish between my use of the term sex work to encompass the sale or consumption of sexual services.

- Abolitionist perspectives

Through analysing social relations, radical feminists highlight women's disadvantaged position and how this is maintained through sexual practices. They claim that a capitalist society, in which men earn higher wages, causes women's economic inequality and contributes to women's subordination and male dominance. The work of Barry (1995), Dworkin (1981), Farley (2005), Jeffreys (1997), Mackinnon (1989) and Raymond (2004) exemplifies this perspective. For Mackinnon, rape, sexual harassment, pornography and prostitution, among other practices, "express and actualize the distinctive power of men over women in society; their effective permissibility confirms and extends it" (1989: 315). Mackinnon claims this is supported by a theory of sexuality that has developed out of the women's movement in which male domination is sexual, where men especially sexualize hierarchy, including gender. Consequently, a radical feminist theory of sexuality understands it as a construct of male power: defined by men, forced on women, thus the sexuality of dominance and submission (Mackinnon, 1989: 316).

For Farley, this domination and submission can be seen in the damage inflicted on those involved in prostitution which:

is multi-traumatic with extremely high rates of physical and sexual violence perpetuated against people who are vulnerable usually as a result of gender, poverty, previous history of sexual assault, marginalization because of race, ethnicity, or a combination of these factors (2005: 951).

Work located in this perspective emphasizes the violence prostitute's experience, before, during and after involvement in prostitution¹⁶. However, Dworkin (1993) defines prostitution as the use of a woman's body by a man who pays to do what he wants and further argues that there need be no extra violence, as prostitution in itself is an explicit abuse of a woman's body. Furthermore, this use, by men, of women's bodies, is an expression of hatred for the female body and allows men to communicate with each other, expressing a commonality in that as men, they are not 'her'. Thus, prostitution in a male dominated society places prostituted women at the bottom of the hierarchy in which all men are above them and every man benefits. Men as a result exist as one group which has and maintains power over another group (Dworkin, 1993).

Radical feminists argue that prostitution cannot be freely chosen, as women are structurally constrained along social, economic and political lines (Barry, 1995; Raymond, 1998). Jeffreys (1997) argues that men's choice to take part in prostitution is a social construct, rooted in ideas of men's dominance and women's subordination. She draws on Barry (1995) to argue that the idea of 'choice' in commercial sex is useless, as prostitution represents the purest form of objectification of women, one in which men achieve male dominance and the prostitute is:

... made not a real person ... An unknown body which is paid for is likely to offer more effective gratification in this regard than a woman who is known and may intrude demands and make comments which might remind her user that she is a real person (1997: 219).

¹⁶ See Barry (1995), Farley (1998) and Hunter (1993).

This analysis fails to consider that some clients regularly visit the same women, as they prefer visiting someone whom they know, and also seek to engage in communication outside the commercial sex encounter (Sanders, 2008a, 2008b). In addition, it neglects the fact that women make 'demands', such as determining what is, and is not available to clients, as will be explored below. Jeffreys further argues that men's use of women in prostitution enables avoidance of equal sexual relationships in non-commercial contexts where sexual behaviours need to be negotiated and reciprocal pleasure is seen as fundamental. Again this can be critiqued by the evidence that men enjoy pleasuring the sex worker, whether this is illusory or not, and that some sex workers do experience sexual pleasure in encounters (Hart, 1998; Savitz and Rosen, 1988).

Shrage (1989), for example, argues that the commercialisation of sexuality is not intrinsically oppressive to women; rather it is the widespread approval of certain values that politically and socially marginalize women. She further argues that it is the cultural context of prostitution which sustains and reinforces patriarchal principles and is so oppressive to female sex workers and women more generally. These cultural conventions include the acceptance of a potent male sex drive, men's assumption of dominance in their relations with others, and an association between identity and sexual behaviour which constitutes a double standard, where 'promiscuous' women are seen as damaged and of a lower social status.¹⁷

¹⁷ See O'Connell Davidson (1998) for a further review of dominant discourses that negatively construct female prostitutes.

Central to the arguments above, and included in the work of Barry (1995), is the premise that prostitution is wrong because it degrades women. Pateman highlights the association between the self and degradation, by drawing on the relationship between sexuality and the sense of self to argue that:

the sexual contract reveals the patriarchal construction of the difference between masculinity and femininity is the political difference between freedom and subjection, and that sexual mastery is the major means through which men affirm their manhood ... he contracts to buy sexual use of a *woman* for a given period ... the prostitution contract enables men to constitute themselves as civil masters for a time (1988: 207).

Furthermore, women's senses of self are constructed through "sexual activity and when a prostitute contracts out use of her body she is thus selling *herself* in a very real sense" (Pateman, 1988: 207). Thus, "when women's' bodies are on sale in the capitalist market, the terms of the original contract cannot be forgotten; the laws of male sex-right is publicly affirmed, and men gain public acknowledgement as women's sexual masters" (1988: 208). Schotten, however, claims that discourses of male domination, rife in abolitionist accounts, fail to recognise how men are produced as men within the context of hegemonic discourses as "constructed subjects of masculine power" (2005: 220). She suggests that whilst male domination may produce the gendering of commercial sex in that it is predominantly women who sell sex to men, men as clients are also formed by male domination. Consequently constructions of masculinity, including men's sexual prowess, are no more natural than other forms of male identification, and so she argues for a denaturalizing of masculinity in order to understand more about the sex industry. By analysing sex work from a masculinity perspective, we are thus able to explore "gendered cultural

configurations of power” (Schotten, 2005: 234). I will return to this in Chapter 3.

According to Bernstein (1999), Overall (1992), Mackinnon (1989) and Pateman (1988) argue that sexuality is at the heart of all gender inequality and sexual objectification, and thus women’s subjection. Overall’s socialist feminist account draws on Rubin’s (1984) criteria for evaluating sexual behaviour, which suggests that issues of coercion, pleasure, and the mutual consideration and treatment of each partner are fundamental to judgement of sexual acts. Overall, who evaluates prostitution as a construct of male supremacy, states that she feels there is something deeply wrong with prostitution, and that, as a feminist, whilst she could appreciate sex workers’ human rights demands, she could not ‘respect’ sex work itself because prostitution is bad for *all* women (1992: 708). Some of what is wrong with prostitution concerns the conditions that make it risky, debilitating, coercive or difficult, but these circumstances are neither exclusive nor necessary to commercial sex. She argues that if commercial sex existed, as it does in some cases now, in the context of relative freedom, safety, hygiene and control, then some feminist condemnation towards commercial sex could not be upheld. However, Overall (1992) claims that utilising Rubin’s sexual liberation perspective is inadequate, as it fails to take into consideration the structural aspects of commercial sex and the grounds for its existence. She claims that other forms of women’s work such as nursing can exist outside of any form of commercialization, such as in care for one’s elderly parents. Yet in contrast, prostitution by definition relies on some sort of commoditized exchange; “an asymmetrical relationship of exchange in which

the sex worker provides sexual services and the customer supplies recompense for those services” (1992: 716-717). If the asymmetrical economic exchange is not present, the sexual transaction cannot be defined as sex work, and instead it is a sexual encounter or relationship that is not based on service for material gain (Overall, 1992). It is therefore, the purchasing of sexual activity that is important and this uneven exchange sets up the context for other forms of asymmetry along the lines of class, gender, age and race.

As suggested by Barry (1995) and Farley (2004), the power imbalances of women as the less powerful selling to men, the more powerful, endorse women’s sexuality as constructed differently than men’s, and so commercial sex is a “gendered practice in which women are constructed as the sexual servants of men, and the buying of sexual service is defined as a benefit for men” (Overall, 1992: 722). What is unacceptable about commercial sex lies in the ways that the conditions of capitalist patriarchy generate male sexual needs and the ways in which women realize them. Shrage’s (1994) resultant cultural critique of Overall, contends that capitalist and patriarchal conditions, as the cause of commercial sex, can be disproved by the existence of commercial sex where these conditions are not present. She claims that Overall’s argument that prostitution is an unequal practice, defined by intersections of capitalism and patriarchy, does not consider specific contexts where different dynamics are present in the interaction, such as customers disadvantaged by gender but advantaged by race and class, such as female sex tourists. Furthermore, in some contexts the economically disadvantaged are selling to the economically disadvantaged, as in Hart’s study (1998). Thus the key flaw in Overall’s

argument is that she fails to examine sex work in a multitude of contexts (as do many radical feminist analyses of sex work) and thus has no grounds to claim anything. Shrage (1994) argues that we must not seek universal causes of commercial sex and we must not suggest universal understandings of sex. Instead, we should aim to grasp the *differing contextual* understandings and meanings of sexual practices.

The analysis presented above, with a focus on male dominance, tends to view power relations between client and sex worker as in the hands of the men. Indeed there is empirical evidence to support their claims, with McKeganey and Barnard (1996) suggesting that clients' views of sex workers revolved around power and money. Similarly, Hoigard and Finstad argue that what the client buys is actually "the power to interpret what is sold and the power to live in his illusions" (1992: 96). However, they also state that what is bought does vary, ranging from selfish pleasure, excitement and domination, to intimacy, warmth and being dominated. These two studies are both located in street sex markets and thus are not generalisable to all commercial sex locations. Consequently, abolitionist perspectives that draw only on narrow empirical evidence and singular contexts fail to recognise the multiplicity of experiences and actors and have a tendency towards over-generalisation that is common to much feminist theorising around commercial sex.

In sum abolitionist perspectives reject the notion that commercial sex can be chosen by women and thus fail to distinguish between voluntary and forced prostitution, they focus on social and economic inequality between men and

women in wider society, and they claim that prostitution maintains and reinforces women's social disadvantage, reducing all women to sex objects and affirming a discourse of male entitlement. However, this body of work has been criticised. Weitzer (2005a), for example identifies many methodological flaws. Whilst not dismissing the idea that violence can be a problem in commercial sex, he argues that the radical work of Raymond (2004), Farley (2004) and Raphael and Shaprio (2004) relies on unrepresentative samples, with findings not recognised as ungeneralizable, that accounts of recruitment methods are frequently absent from research reports, and that these projects are initiated from biased standpoints. He does, however, state that this bias is seen in other sex work literature, which romanticises sex work by selecting the best examples, and this provides no greater knowledge than the most problematic examples of radical feminist theorising. So, just as commercial sex is not a homogenous industry, neither is the literature. My discussion will now move on to address feminist sex 'work' perspectives.

- Sex 'work'

Nagle argues that feminist theorising of sex work predominantly frames those involved as experiencing it as "negative/in the past/ coerced / victimizing" (1997: 4). The sex 'work' argument, where the commodified body of the sex worker offers a legitimate business activity by servicing the legitimate leisure activity of the client, is presented by some sex workers and theorists as women selling their *labour* as in any other occupation. Consequently, sex work has been compared to other service industries, such as fast food employment, and

also to work which has a care element, such as psychotherapy (Chapkis, 1997). However, in this context, in Brewis and Linstead's (2000b) view, it happens to be 'sexuality' and not social or care skills.

Queen (1997) and Alexander (1997) challenge abolitionist perspectives and the assumption of gender inequality by recognising that a balance of power between providing a service and exercising control over the client is fundamental and that this relies on negotiation, as will be demonstrated more thoroughly below by drawing on O'Connell Davidson (1998). By confronting the silences and conservative stances of radical feminists such as Dworkin, they argue that abolitionist perspectives, reject any acknowledgement of 'voluntary' commercial sex involvement, construct all sex workers as submissive, powerless, degraded victims and any woman who claims otherwise is "brain washed" or has a "false consciousness" (Alexander, 1997: 83). The volume of these anti-sex 'work' perspectives, Queen (1997) claims, further enhances the stigma, lack of respect and overall negativity that sex workers face. Positioning female sex workers as powerless and locating them within discourses of victimhood fails to see the women as active decision makers, which increases negative discourses and promotes stigma (Wojcicki and Malala, 2001). This is not to deny the structural inequalities that female sex workers may face, such as economic desperation and lack of educational opportunities, but Wojcicki and Malala seek to demonstrate sex worker's agency in situations where it is thought to be missing.

Alexander argues that abolitionist perspectives do not challenge the patriarchal conditions which restrict and regulate the women, but instead aim to “control the woman who is out of control”, consequently internalizing the widespread hatred of women (1997: 83). Thus, Queen (1997) claims, sex work offers liberation from society’s limited scripts of female behaviour and the opportunity to cross boundaries and rebel against constraints generated by fears of sex. This fear of sex, especially within the context of economic exchange, is also questioned by Highleyman (1997). She argues that sex can be seen as an area where women are powerful. While men, as a group, may have physical, economic and political power over women, women have something that heterosexual men very much desire. She states that some women learn early on to use this power for their own benefit and sex work can simply be seen as an extension of this. Working as a professional dominatrix, she claims, gives her an insight into how men are caged by their desires and she argues that exploiting a man’s sexual fantasies can be a powerful method of exercising control, even though this may only be temporary. The amount of money spent and levels of guilt, shame and secrecy are all high for these men, as they bid to openly express their sexual identities.

Alexander (1997) advocates a sex-workers’ *rights* perspective, in that sex workers should be entitled to dictate their own working conditions, have rights to form unions, have access to training and clean and safe working premises, have rights to refuse unsafe sexual practices, and limits should be placed on stakes taken by third parties. In achieving this, she claims, we need to make sex work answerable to the same regulations that reduce harm in work more

generally. To assist respect, which anti-sex 'work' proponents claim is missing, a feminist discourse that can educate men about what sex worker / client relations should be like is necessary (Queen, 1997). Queen further highlights the advantages that sex work can offer in terms of "autonomy, free time and a comfortable income" (1997: 135). This is a point which Anderson (2002) emphasizes, by arguing that as abolitionists do not solve the disadvantages¹⁸ faced by some women, it is important to recognise that even those women lowest down the hierarchy do gain from engaging in voluntary sex work. Generally, sex 'work' debates focus on the freely chosen aspect of sex work, the view of it as legitimate labour, similar to other employment, with a violation of human rights if opportunities are denied to be a sex worker. They reject ideas that female heterosexuality sustains male dominance and instead state that sex workers charge men for what they expect women to provide for free, hence all women are empowered (see Sloan and Wahab, 2000).

Matching shifting feminist theorising, commercial sex markets themselves have altered and this will be elaborated below. This move over time, and the recognition that sex work can be seen as labour, parallels a more 'business' orientated shift within the organisation, and practices of those involved in sexual commerce. These feminist positions have developed and their integration will be demonstrated in the account below exploring shifts within the sex industry itself.

¹⁸ Such disadvantages include the fact that women are generally poorer than men, they are less well placed in the labour market and some women who enter sex work do so due to homelessness or drug addiction, see Anderson (2002).

Shifting Markets

The growth in visibility, consumption and diversity of sexual commerce is now well recognised (Agustin, 2005; Scoular and Sanders, 2010; Weitzer, 2000).

Furthermore, commercial sex industries, as well as varying across location, are understood to be located within specific modes of production and consumption which are historically, contextually and culturally contingent. Consequently, Agustin¹⁹ (2005, 2007) is leading the call for the inclusion of a cultural element in work on commercial sex. She argues that the erotic industry, “operates in a complex socio-cultural context in which the meaning of buying and selling sex is not always the same” (2005: 619). Furthermore, an interdisciplinary cultural framework would assist in plugging gaps in knowledge and allow for results to be mapped onto other social and cultural concepts:

A cultural-studies approach ... would look at commercial sex in its widest sense, examining its intersections with ... consumption, family life, entertainment, ... economics, urban space, sexuality, tourism and criminality ... race, class, gender, identity and citizenship... [it] would look for everyday practices involved and try to reveal how our societies distinguish between activities considered normatively social and activities denounced as morally wrong (2007: 169).

¹⁹ Agustin (2003) assumes a similar position to O’Connell Davidson (1998) that sex ‘work’ and abolitionist perspectives are inadequate, as will be explored more thoroughly in the forthcoming discussion. She claims her own contribution is to highlight that much *more than sex* occurs within sexual commerce, paralleling feminist work on heterosexuality discussed in Chapter 3 that suggests that heterosexuality involves much more than just sex (Hockey *et al.*, 2008). She claims that sex ‘work’ discourses discuss health, safety and professionalism on one hand and tenderness, intimacy on another – caught in a tug of war. Thus she calls for a recognition of the context in which people are living out their sexual lives, one in which perhaps the romantic ideal has not been achieved or is not sought, but intimacy and sex are still desired. It is the wider social and cultural environment that needs to be explored in order to make sense of these changes.

Cultural work highlights the diverse forms that the buying and selling of sex can take and involvement in commercial sex is increasingly being seen as a leisure pursuit (Sanders, 2008a), as representing changes in broader consumer cultures (Brents and Hausbeck, 2007), and as contributing to wider understandings of cultural differences in sexuality and sexual relationships (Nelson, 1987).

As Bernstein argues, Westernised, large-scale sexual commerce is a recent occurrence, materializing out of the shifts and confusion of mid-nineteenth century industrial capitalism, such as urbanization, the decline of traditional family networks, and the growth of wage labour, generating new boundaries between the public and private (2007: 23). These post-industrial transformations of sexuality and culture however, reveal a paradox in which there is increasing political problematisation of the demand for sexual services, which will be reviewed below, together with an “unbridled ethic of sexual consumption” in which demand has both increased and become more specialised, transgressing technological, spatial and social boundaries (2007: 155).

These shifts in modern commercial sex markets include the industry’s expansion and mainstreaming (Scoular and Sanders, 2010), the influence of globalisation, including increased mobility and technological development (Holt and Blevins, 2007; Katsulis, 2009), and economic restructuring of commercial sex enterprises at both a top level, with the introduction of chains of lap dancing clubs, to the individual level of sex workers’ practices and

organisation (Bernstein, 2005; Brents and Sanders, 2010). The expansion of the sex industry refers to the growth in 'size', including increased numbers of consumers and providers, a rise in the volume and total of economic transactions, and spatial expansion. The diversification of the industry refers to a greater range of clients and a wider remit of services and products available²⁰. Whilst accurate estimates of costs and numbers of actors involved in commercial sex are difficult to ascertain, the assertion that commercial sex industries are now a significant market sector within national economies can be seen in the fact that rentals of hard-core porn films in the USA rose from 75 million in 1985 to 686 million in 1998 (Weitzer, 2000) and that in the UK in August 2007 there were 40,582 PunterNet field reports convey transactions of £5,129,615²¹ (Sanders, 2008a). Similarly, using internet data from PunterNet Moffatt and Peters (2004) estimate that in 1999 private and parlour commercial sex encounters totalled £538 million and Jones *et al.*, (2003) state that 200 lap dancing clubs were in operation in the UK in 2002, with a media report citing an annual turnover of £300 million.

The selling and consuming of sex is big business. With consumption being the driving force behind the global economic system, the service sector has become the main industry, and with this has come: new commodities, forms of labour and consumption; growth in travel and tourism; and non-tourist services becoming more 'touristic', selling experiences, fantasy and excitement (Breints

²⁰ See special issue of the Journal of Law and Society, 37(1), March 2010 edited by Scoular and Sanders (2010) for a selection of papers which demonstrate the diversity within the sex industry across location, participants, services and contexts.

²¹ As of the 28th July 2010 there have been 96,964 field reports published on PunterNet since it first went online, suggesting a 100 percent increase over the last three years. They cost a total of £12,452,142. The average cost per visit was £129 (PunterNet.com).

and Hausbeck, 2007: 425-6). These authors explore how economic and consumer shifts mean that sex is now marketed as a product, particularly adopting the marketing strategies of tourist industries. Seedy back alley sex venues are being replaced by large, glamorous adult stores and gentleman's clubs. Using Nevada's legal brothel industry as an example, they describe how the 'illusion of sexuality' (2007: 429) is utilised to draw tourists to the area, even though casinos persistently disassociate themselves from the brothel industry. Moving from the McDonalised standardised assembly line model, the larger brothels in Nevada promote an individualistic tourist experience with souvenir shops, coffee lounges, restaurants, as well as the themed fantasy rooms and upmarket facilities, indicative of a rational management discourse which stipulates an individualistic pursuit of pleasure as Chapter 3 will explain (Jackson and Scott, 1997). Brents and Hausbeck (2007) go further and argue that working conditions have the possibility to improve to match other service industries, as the more glamorous touristic businesses compete with the mainstream service sector for qualified workers. Drawing on sex 'work' perspectives described above, this shift supports the advocacy of sex workers employment rights, such as health and safety, and protection, rights granted in other forms of employment.

This shift in analysis to incorporate a more cultural framework tells us as much about the sex industry and its consumers as it does about broader capitalist cultures and shifts. Economic mainstreaming of the UK's own sex industry is demonstrated in Leeds by Sanders, who documents how, despite intolerance and police intervention against voluntary sexual commerce in both street and

off-street locations, these markets remain (Sanders and Brents, 2010).

Furthermore, the tolerance of indirect sexual services has been assisted by the application of other non-sex industry business legislation to enterprises such as lap dancing venues, which come under the same rules as any other establishment selling alcohol. Thus, licensing laws offer opportunities for entrepreneurs to engage with commercial sex markets with minimum legal risk. Sanders documents the rise and integration of lap dancing clubs into the night time economy of Leeds' entertainment districts, with the consequent visibility and accessibility of commercial sex as labour and consumption, reflecting sex 'work' perspectives above. This mainstreaming of the industry parallels what Bernstein terms a "shift from a relational to a *recreational* model of sexual behaviour" in which sexual contact is assisted by its market place location (2007: 118). Furthermore, as commercial sex industries have become more mainstream, by replicating tourism experiences or social entertainment more broadly, and in a similar way to which people use recreational drugs to enhance their 'night time' social experiences, some men who pay for sex also seek to enhance their *recreational* commercial sex experiences through other consumable products such as the quasi legal use of Viagra to enhance and prolong performance (Katsulis, 2009).

Alongside the integration of sexual commerce into the wider fabric of social life and entertainment, and shifts in the economic structuring of global industries due to globalisation, there has been a parallel increase in mobility, and thus tourism. Sex and travel are frequently associated with each other in both developed and developing countries, with European cities, such as

Amsterdam, having famous sex sectors and some European holiday destinations having reputations for freely available tourist sex (O'Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor, 2005). However, when referring to sex tourism there is a common association with Latin America, the Caribbean, Thailand and other Southeast Asian countries. Cabezas (2004) argues that recently, sex tourism work has started to critique some of the previous work, including narrow definitions of sex tourism, the idea that all sex workers are victims, and the dichotomy between commercial and non-commercial encounters. This parallels shifts in broader sex work research agendas and reflects the earlier discussion of feminist positions which suggest that sex work is more than expression of men's dominance over women and that sex workers express agency, as will be returned to later.

Sex tourism discourse exposes the potential for agency and economic sustainability, as well as the possibility for exploitative relationships based on class, gender and race (Kempadoo, 2001; O'Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor, 2005; Sanchez Taylor, 2001). However, perhaps the darker side of globalisation and the resultant opportunity for mobility can be seen in human trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation. Many features of globalisation, such as improved travel and transport networks, technological advancements in communications, and structural changes producing the feminization of poverty, can be linked to trafficking (Jeffreys, 2009). Again, the term trafficking has definitional ambiguities, with feminist debates divided over the relation between trafficking and commercial sex (Limoncelli, 2009), with the failure to distinguish between voluntary sex work and trafficking creating issues for UK

sex workers and reflected in policy debates which will be explored below (Sanders and Campbell, 2009). Radical feminists, such as Jeffreys (2009) argue that commercial sex industries fuel the demand for trafficked labour. In contrast, Sanders and Campbell (2009) argue that the majority of those involved in sexual commerce are not trafficked further drawing attention to the oppositional feminist perspectives discussed above.

However, perhaps the most significant shift in the landscape of sexual commerce revolves around technological shifts, namely the rise of the internet and electronic communication. Sanders (2008a) argues that the 'revolutionary' impact of computer mediated technologies has reshaped, repackaged and expanded the spectrum of the sexual services industry²². The role of the internet in beneficially shaping sex workers' practices and conditions has been recognised, including the opportunity the internet presents to side step third party management through personal advertising, offering more autonomous working conditions and increased economic benefit. Advertising through speciality websites, offering specific characteristics or services targeting a specific audience, can also maximise sex workers' profits²³ (Bernstein, 2005; Sanders, 2005b; Sharp and Earle, 2003).

However, the increased advertising opportunities provided by the web are not the only significant factor. At the beginning of 1999, PunterNet was set up²⁴.

²² A Google search of, escort + advertisement + sex, returns approximately 2,080,000 results, merely hinting at the sheer volume of material on the web.

²³ For a fuller overview of the benefits from the Internet for sex workers, see Bernstein (2005) and Sanders (2005b).

²⁴ See Sanders (2008a) for a more detailed review of PunterNet's origins and development.

Initially established for male clients the website's home page describes its purpose as:

to facilitate the exchange of information on prostitution in the UK. Here you will find information on where to find services, what to expect, legalities, etc. You will be able to read reviews of encounters with working girls and submit your own "field reports". This web site aims to promote better understanding between customers and ladies in hopes that everyone may benefit, with less stressful, more enjoyable and mutually respectful visits (PunterNet.com).

The site requires no fee and 'guests' can view the majority of the message boards and all field reports²⁵ without registering. Many similar national and local sites have appeared with other sites describing themselves as a 'meeting place for like minded people' or a place 'bustling with punters, massage parlours and working girls sharing information, news & gossip ... helping to build on an already healthy community'. Sharp and Earle's exploration of a random sample of field reports, suggests that the internet is seen as transforming commercial sex by offering men a space to share their experiences and information in a safe environment, where their practises are normalised (2003: 41). Furthermore, the internet offers anonymity to both buyer and seller, in addition to offering the ability to "communicate, gain information and purchase products provide[ing] the user with the opportunity to find the best resources for their particular need, desire and budget" (Castle and Lee, 2008: 188). Consequently, it is argued that the internet will help the commercial sex industry to continue to grow (Earle and Sharp, 2008b).

²⁵ A field report is 'a written report of an experience with a prostitute by a client' (PunterNet.com). The role of these will be explained in more detail below.

Despite the perceived positive impact of the internet on sexual commerce, questions have been raised about the negative role of the internet. The promotion of sex tourism online promotes a view of foreign women as “generous, cheap and replaceable”, with a parallel devaluation of Westernised women (Katsulis, 2009: 9). Engaging in sexual commerce with foreign women is constructed as a “natural expression of male sex drive, and male entitlement is not usually questioned” (Katsulis, 2009: 9). Additionally, commercial sex websites can be seen to produce and reproduce broader constructions of male dominance, solidarity and privilege, to objectify and commoditise women’s bodies and sexualities, and to deny sexual citizenship to (female) sex workers whilst affirming sexual citizenship to (male) consumers (Hearn, 2006; Sharpe and Earle, 2003; Williams *et al.*, 2008).

Without reviewing in-depth the debate around the positive or negative impact of sex work sites²⁶, it is clear that these internet sites offer a window into a previously hidden and hard to access world, cloaked in a veil of legal confusion and negative stereotypes. As such, shifts pertaining to the organisation of, and practices within the sex industry have provided the opportunity to address the absence and silence of male clients in much feminist work described above.

There are now numerous studies that have drawn on these types of site for data (Blevins and Holt, 2009; Earle and Sharp, 2008a, 2008b; Holt and Blevins, 2007; Katsulis, 2009; Martilla, 2008; Sanders, 2008a; Soothill and Sanders,

²⁶ See Hearn (2006) for a more thorough review of the role of the internet on sexualities including sex work, trafficking and sexual exploitation.

2005; Williams *et al.*, 2008²⁷). These studies can be used to gain an understanding of the sex industry, and to provide information about clients' involvement in commercial sex and their behavioural practices, insights which will be returned to below (Soothill and Sanders, 2005)²⁸.

Male Clients: What do we Know?

- Who pays for sex?

As suggested above, much feminist work has focused on women's experiences, interpreted men's involvement within theoretical models of male dominance, or has simply neglected to consider men's experiences. Perhaps reflecting this, established social science literature has been less than favourable towards male clients, depicting them as someone:

Whose physical, psychological, or social inadequacies and personal problems have driven him to engage in sexually deviant conduct with the behaviour, visiting a prostitute being itself defined as sexually deviant regardless of the content of the practitioner-client interaction (Holzman and Pines, 1982: 91).

Hoigard and Finstad (1992) claim there has been a shift away from this discourse of the pathologically deviant man. For example, while Gibbens and Silverman (1960) suggested that personal psychological problems, especially linked to a disrupted childhood home life, may lead men to pay for sex, more recently McLeod describes clients as "Mr Average...normal blokes" (1982: 60-61) and Sharpe suggests they are "ordinary" men (1997: 369). In addition to the

²⁷ Some of these studies look only at the content of the websites including field reports and message board conversations, whilst others support this type of material with interviews with clients either online, face to face or over the phone, thus their limitations must be recognised.

²⁸ It is recognised that some of these studies use only material from the web to draw conclusions and are thus limited, but nonetheless they are insightful.

common factor of being *Mr Ordinary*, men represented in this way are seen to be diverse, varying in age, employment, relationship status and ethnicity (Freund *et al.*, 1991; Ward *et al.*, 2005; Weitzer, 2009). Studies confirm that a significant proportion of clients are married or in long-term relationships (McKeganey and Barnard, 1996; Sanders, 2008a) and that they tend to have no criminal record (Hester and Westmarland, 2004; Home Office, 2004).

Sullivan and Simon (1998) claim that the average age tends to be above 39 years yet, different locations appear to produce slightly different results. Sanders (2008a) sample, who mostly visited off street locations, had an average age of 45, with a range of 22 to 70, and Brooks-Gordon's (2006) study of records of men stopped for commercial sex related offences (and thus with an emphasis on kerb crawling) found that the average age was 39²⁹, with a range from 17 to 77; both samples showing a spread across all age groups³⁰. Clients tend to be in a higher socio-economic group than the women they were seeing, are mostly employed and are employed across the spectrum of professional, managerial and manual jobs (Kinnell, 2006; Sanders, 2008a). Sanders (2008a) identifies most of her sample as middle class, with nearly 70 percent having attended university and having at least one degree, and less than 15 percent being working class, employed in manual jobs. Similarly Brooks-Gordon (2006) found that only 18 percent of clients in her sample were unskilled or unemployed, with 22 percent being skilled manual workers, and over 30

²⁹ It is recognised that these results could be interpreted as showing the same thing, however, the difference of 6 years between the two sample may be suggestive of a difference across location.

³⁰ Sanders (2008a) recognises older participants maybe more likely to volunteer for research, something I also found.

percent classed as professional or white collar clerical workers. Again then, we find a minority in lower socio-economic classes. There also tends to be a higher rate of white British respondents and whilst some Asian men have been included in studies, Afro-Caribbean men were typically absent.³¹

- Prevalence

The stigmatised and legally grey status of buying sex means that calculating the number of male buyers is a task fraught with methodological difficulty (Kinnell, 2006). However, Ward *et al.*'s (2005) comparative work, using UK surveys of sexual attitudes and lifestyles, suggests a significant increase in the proportion of men paying for sex. In 1990, 5.6% of men aged 16 – 44 (n=6,000) disclosed paying for sex at some point, and in 2000 (n=4,672) this figure rose to 8.8 %. Similar increases were in concerning 'paying for sex within the past 5 years' of 2% (1990) and 4.2% (2000), and within the last year of 0.5% (1990) and 1.3% (2000). Ward *et al.* (2005) claim that the population-based study demonstrates that a significant proportion of men in Britain engage in paid-for sex with women, and that this proportion is rising. It was also found to be more common among men in their late twenties to early thirties, living in London,

³¹ Comparisons have been made with non-clients, however the contradictory and questionable accuracy of such findings, as there is no way to be certain that the non-client sample is accurate, mean that these studies must be treated with caution. Monto (1999) claims that when compared to men in the US national population, more clients were found to be currently un-married or had never married, whilst Pitts *et al.* (2004) found that there was no significant difference between clients' and non-clients' marital status. Other studies found that there were no differences between clients and non-clients for variables including marital status, length of longest relationship, current relationship status, age, occupation or parental status (Xantidis and McCabe, 2000). However, clients reportedly had greater discomfort in social situations involving women, and also were more likely to seek out unpredictable and risky situations for the purpose of sensation seeking. In addition, they were more likely to have had more sexual partners, but less frequent sexual relations over the past year than the national sample (Monto, 1999; Xantidis and McCabe, 2000).

who are currently single with the highest proportion made up of men previously married. It is important to treat these figures with caution as this study, whilst offering significant insight into what is a difficult task, is limited due to the fact that it excludes men who are 50 and over, which, as Sanders' (2008a) and my study demonstrate, make up a significant proportion of men who engage in paid-for sex in certain contexts within the UK. Moreover, the methodological difficulties of working with survey data, the influences of cultural differences, and the relevance of data collected during the 1990s, which reflect past trends and not necessarily current patterns, all need to be taken into account. However, what can be deduced from attempts to measure prevalence is that a significant number of men will pay for sex at some point in their life time³².

- Motivations

Initial work on clients focused on motivations as well as demographic profiles. The findings of such studies can be summarised as: access to specific sexual acts, including those that a partner would not do, or specialist services such as bondage; the opportunity to sleep with a large number of women including providing married men the opportunity to continue to sleep with large numbers of women without maintaining a series of complex affairs; access to women with certain physical characteristics, such as ethnicity or age; the limited contact necessary in order to access sex; lack of commitment to a partner;

³² Attempts to measure global prevalence vary dramatically; from 1% to over 80% of men in places such as America, Australia, Africa, Europe and Thailand, claiming to have paid for sex (see Atchison *et al.*, 1998; Crael *et al.*, 2006; Mansson, 2001; Weitzer, 2009). Thus reflecting contextual and cultural differences that Shrage (1994) argues must be recognised in a bid to move away from universe understandings of sexual commerce. But, again highlighting that a significant number of men are paying for sex.

paying for sex as a thrill and a source of pleasure in itself; and difficulties in accessing non-commercial partners (Campbell, 1998; McKeganey and Barnard, 1996; Monto, 2000; Pitts *et al.*, 2004; Sanders, 2008a; Weitzer, 2005b, 2009).

Paying for sex tends not to reflect one motivational factor. Consequently the recognition that paying for sex involves *more* than just sexual relief, and is thus more complex, has led to the development of typologies of motivations, challenging the abolitionist accounts reviewed at the start of this chapter which locate men's involvement in models of dominance and submission, only. Pitts *et al.* (2004) identified three broad motivations: factors of ease (avoidance of relationship, desire for specific sexual acts, less trouble than conventional relationships); engagement (desire for company and emotional engagement of the sex worker); and arousal (desire for relief and negative association with drugs or alcohol). Sanders (2008a) lists four motivational factors: emotional need (loneliness or lack of intimacy), life course stage (older men becoming widowed), unsatisfactory sexual relationships (deterioration of sexual or emotional aspect in non-commercial relationships), and difficulties with non-commercial dating mechanisms (disdain for casual sex). Sanders terms these 'push' factors – "aspects of men's lives that are lacking" in contrast to 'pull' factors – aspects of the sex industry that are attractive and are promoted as "entertainment" (2008a: 40). 'Pull' factors refer to the more cultural aspects of the sex industry, its "nature ... what it offers and the glitzy ... images and promises that emanate from adverts, websites, stereotypes, pictures and the allurements of fantasy created specifically for those who want to trade cash for pleasure" (Sanders, 2008a: 45). This allure, coupled with the expansion,

mainstreaming, increased specialisation and diversification of the sex industry, as discussed above, has occurred alongside Bernstein's (2007) recognition of a shift from relational to recreational models of sexual behaviour. The acknowledgment of commercial sex as a legitimate form of entertainment, from entertaining business clients (Allison, 1993) to sex tours abroad to visit a 'different reality' (Martilla, 2008: 39), coupled with the increased corporate organisational structuring of various sex industry markets (Brents and Hausbeck, 2007), assist these shifts. This desire to visit alternative realities allows clients to escape from the mundane practices and process of daily life "leaving behind their values, morals, expectations and responsibilities as a husband, a father, or a worker and being able to be 'purely selfish' " (Martilla, 2008: 39); ideas which will be returned to. However these shifts have not been fully acknowledged in some debates, especially those which seek to locate clients as a homogenous group, detrimental to the wider social order³³; it is these debates which are discussed below, before I return to the insights of the more nuanced work suggested above.

³³ Even though, for some people, commercial sex can take place privately, offer a lucrative form of employment, and be entered into consensually, there is significant reference in the literature to the many negative aspects associated with commercial sex for those directly involved, the communities affected by it, and society as a whole. These include disturbance to neighbourhoods where it occurs, including environmental damage, economic degeneration and an increased fear of crime; spread of sexually transmitted diseases; links with drug abuse and markets; links with levels of other crime; links with organised crime; violence; stigmatisation and social exclusion of those involved; abuse of children; human trafficking; the trauma and shame felt by families of men who use the women that get caught; and an effect on the attitudes of men to women and on gender equality in society (See ACPO, 2004; Bindel and Kelly, 2003; Hester and Westmarland, 2004; Home Office, 2004).

Constructing Clients: Contamination, Control and Political Implications

Despite the recognition of these shifts within the sex industry and the impact upon the practices of those involved as buyers and sellers, research into male clients is frequently located within broader strands of work on 'deviance' such as violence, kerb crawling and sexually transmitted diseases, and clients are seen as a population in need of control.

- Contamination

Sex work and sexually transmitted diseases have indeed been historically linked, and the relationships between sexually transmitted infections, commercial sex and wider public health were officially marked by the passing of the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864, 1866 and 1869, which allowed any woman suspected of being a 'common' prostitute to be stopped by police and forced to undergo medical examination if the health authority so desired (Phoenix and Oerton, 2005)³⁴. More recent research on sexual health has recognised the diversity of sex workers, included clients, and explored both clients' and sex workers' non-commercial sexual practices. Evidence suggests that, in some contexts, clients report taking part in safe sex during commercial interactions (Day *et al.*, 1993; Plumridge *et al.*, 1997b) and express concern about HIV risk (McKeganey and Barnard, 1996), and that intervention programmes could reduce HIV risk behaviours within short time periods (Lau

³⁴ This 'cleansing' of women during the Victorian period occurred alongside male clients being allowed to go freely about their business. Despite advances during the late 1980s, in which research demonstrated that commercial sex was generally not significantly involved in the spread of HIV, much work continued to focus on female sex workers as vectors of disease, so creating a moralizing and stigmatizing discourse (see Vanwesenbeck, 2001).

et al., 2009). Despite the necessity of condom use within commercial sex, high rates of non condom use in non-commercial sexual encounters were reported by male clients, with Ward *et al.* (2005) suggesting that men who pay for sex have a higher number of sexual contacts both commercial and non-commercial and a higher rate of sexually transmitted infections. Yet it is unclear if this is related to commercial sex involvement or high numbers of sexual partners.

However, despite awareness of sexual health issues, misconceptions about risk were common amongst clients, with some men believing that HIV was widespread among female sex workers; yet few men saw themselves as at risk of infection from commercial sex (McKeganey and Barnard, 1996). This misleading perception was fostered by a 'hierarchy of infection' discourse (Sanders, 2008a: 57), in which clients assessed risk with reference to various factors, including their belief that HIV was more common among street women and that using off-street locations thus offered protection, the way the women looked, if they washed between clients, and their method of contacting clients. Simply put, their risk management strategy consisted of avoiding women who they thought posed the biggest risk.

- Control

As well as the sexual health issues associated with the commercial sex industry, previous research focuses heavily on aspects of criminal deviance. Both providers and clients are located within the realms of criminality and deviance, with the industry itself frequently understood as a criminal enterprise. Sex workers are frequently constructed as 'victims' of violence, including robbery,

sexual assault, coercion and trafficking (Jeffreys, 2009; Kinnell, 2008), or, if not as victims are understood as in need of criminal justice intervention to curtail their deviance, including attendance at court diversion meetings and being issued with ASBO's (Sagar, 2007; Scoular *et al.*, 2007). In parallel, clients are recurrently constructed as exploitative predatory menaces (Brooks-Gordon, 2010; Kinnell, 2006). Kinnell (2008) argues that there is considerable misinformation regarding violence towards sex workers littered throughout media and political discourse, much of it drawing on fictional stereotypes³⁵.

The links between street sex markets and drugs have been highlighted, along with their inherent risk (May *et al.*, 2001). However, May *et al.* (1999) suggest that the risk of violence across various locations differs, with street sex workers being particularly vulnerable to violence from communities, other female sex workers, the general public, boyfriends/ pimps, as well as from clients (see also Sanders, 2004). However, Whittaker and Hart discuss the aspects of indoor sex work that add to its perceived safety when compared to street sex work: the exchange takes place indoors in a lit, contained environment which offers her increased control over the exchange; scope for working with a maid; and increased police tolerance which offers scope for police assistance in dangerous situations (1996: 407).

³⁵ In the wake of the Ipswich murders, Kinnell (2008) argues that Peter Sutcliffe's earlier murders of thirteen women, some of whom were sex workers, have influenced public perceptions of violence in the sex industry, shaping media perceptions, policy interpretations and feminist analyses. More recently after the conviction of Steve Wright for the Ipswich murders, Fiona McTaggart MP misquoted British research on sex workers' risk of murder and inflated it by applying US figures to the UK.

Monto's (1999) large-scale survey of clients (n= 1342) compared results with a nationally representative sample of men who took part in the US General Social Survey and identified a small group of clients who were more likely to inflict violence on women, judge mental about sexuality, attracted to violent sexuality, and who had access to vulnerable women through commercial sex. It is argued that this *small* group of men might be responsible for the high levels of violence that street sex workers experience. In addition, there was a correlation between this potentially violent group of men and those who perceived sexuality as a commodity. Consequently, it is argued that if men have a commodified view of sexuality, this can lead to lack of respect and possible violence towards sex workers and other women.

McKeganey and Barnard (1996) argue that only a minority of interactions between sex workers and clients result in violence, as being a client is defined by payment. Kinnell (2008) explains that some men describe themselves as non-clients and claim not to have known that the woman was a sex worker until she asked for payment, thus inciting rage. As no payment is exchanged these men cannot be seen as clients and are thus non-clients. It appears that non-clients and clients in disguise, seem to legitimate their violence towards sex workers on the premise that it is acceptable to rape and abuse a sex worker, but through their violence and refusal to pay, they are assert they are not clients (Kinnell, 2008). Thus despite abolitionist claims discussed above that all sex work is an expression of male dominance and violence, an assumption reflected in policy debates which will be elaborated on below, male clients are not a homogenous group. The evidence suggests that only a small minority of men

who pay for sex (and are thus clients) have a tendency towards violence, furthermore, evidence suggests that much violence inflicted on sex workers is from non-clients or others³⁶ (Kinnell, 2008).

Kinnell (2008) further argues that radical feminist ideology surrounding the commodification of women's bodies, and the notion that all sex work is inherently violent, is neither useful nor offers any protection. Instead, similar to Agustin's (2007) 'cultural' study call, she argues, that violence must be redefined, to go beyond physical acts such as rape, murder and assault, to include acts which leave sex workers open to humiliation, manhandling, fear and exposure to danger.

As has been shown, not all clients are dangerous or violent and sex workers experience violence from multiple sources including those who *pretend* to be clients. Also, the practices of clients and sex workers may not necessarily be detrimental for sexual health with evidence suggesting that both clients and sex workers engage in safe sex. These assertions further highlight the diverse range of experiences and practices within sex work and draw further attention to the different markets that attract different sex workers and clients leading to different experiences for all involved. However, politics does not reflect this research.

³⁶ The recognition that all violence towards sex workers does not come from clients is gathering momentum. Kinnell (2008) refers to the SWEET Project, which reported that over a nine month period, 31% of attacks were from a pimp or partner and 3% were from a family member. A further 31% of women reported violence from other sources including acquaintances, muggers, vigilantes, drug dealers, other sex workers, men approaching not as clients, with only 34% citing clients. Sex workers reports suggest that most 'client' attacks are committed by men who only pretend to be a client until the sex worker is in a position of vulnerability, especially in robberies and vigilantism (Kinnell, 2008).

- Constructing Clients through Policy

Politically, street-sex work has been the predominant target for intervention, and the image of the client in both media and political discourse, (the resultant implications of these discourses for gendered power relations will be discussed theoretically in Chapter 3), is less than complimentary, also creating challenges for sex workers as Alexander (1997) draws attention to below. The behaviour and activities of female sex workers and clients is “perceived, categorised and classified by many in wider society to be immoral, anti-social and legally deviant” (Sharpe, 1997: 363).

There has been an increased emphasis on tackling the demand for street based prostitution, which Campbell and Sanders (2009) argue, is led by a radical feminist abolitionist influence which defines sex work as violence against women, involuntary, and a cause of the objectification of women. This, coupled globally with what Weitzer (2007) calls with a ‘moral crusade’ against sex trafficking, ensures that criminalisation of men is at the top of political and social agendas. He further argues that despite the unreliable claims of some activists and campaigners (the tenants of which were laid out above), their principles have been incorporated into the many debates concerning commercial sex policy and legislation. So I will now move on to explain in more detail how this problematisation of male clients and men in general has come about.

Generally the sex industry has had minimal state interference and policing, and up until the 1980s male clients had been invisible in policy and legislation.

Phoenix and Oerton (2005) describe the main legal strategy concerning commercial sex as based on tolerance, thus commercial sex was “a public nuisance [yet] a matter of private morality” (2005: 85). However, since then, due to the complaints of community residents such as in Balsall Heath, there began a problematisation of men who pay for sex, targeted especially at kerb crawlers. This emphasized issues of drug use and condom litter, the perceived danger attached to street prostitution, and the harassment of local women. With this came laws against kerb crawlers. The 1985 Sexual Offences Act saw a shift in who was seen as the problem, as the first piece of legislation to mention kerb crawling (Sanders, 2009). The 2001 Criminal Justice and Police Act made kerb crawling an arrestable offence (Sanders, 2009). Sanders (2009) argues that individual groups of men and women involved in the sex industry were blamed for deterioration of the ‘moral fabric’ of society. For example, legislation focuses on kerb crawlers, yet men who visit brothels or escorts are exempt. Public nuisance discourses concerning female sex workers have thus been mapped onto male clients and more recently, commercial sex policy under New Labour has shifted from a liberal approach to intolerance (Sanders, 2009). Contrary to recent calls to criminalise clients, there is evidence, (for example, Brooks-Gordon 2006), that criminalisation does not protect sex workers, or deter clients. Parallel to this, clients’ own voices are frequently absent from policy debates: policy concerning sexual regulation and agency is frequently produced within the context of inadequate knowledge.

In 2004, the government announced it was going to review the laws surrounding prostitution, as they were outdated, confused and ineffective. The

first UK consultation for over half a century concerning the management of prostitution, *Paying the Price* (Home Office, 2004), constructed prostitution as a social problem destroying the lives of individuals and threatening communities (Phoenix and Oerton, 2005). As Sanders (2009) argues, the government's focus on *tackling demand*, as part of the 'Coordinated Prostitution Strategy' (Home Office, 2006), has fuelled the perception that clients are abusive and in need of control. These government assessments have been heavily criticised by Brooks-Gordon (2006) and others, for ignoring research evidence about clients, disregarding legal models that offer alternatives such as the German model, focusing on 'john schools' models, which have been heavily criticised elsewhere, and a lack of recognition of voluntary sex work.

The 'Coordinated Prostitution Strategy' (Home Office, 2006) focused on five areas: prevention; ways out, ensuring justice, tackling off-street prostitution, and tackling demand. Its overall emphasis was on disrupting sex markets by criminalizing sex workers and enforcing laws on clients (Sanders, 2008a).

There was a move towards imposing existing legislation more rigorously on kerb crawlers, addressing communities concerns', using a 3-pronged model of informal warning, court diversions and then prosecution, and various shaming tactics and punishments. However, most of the complex socio-economic reasons for the existence of the sex industry were not addressed. The social positions of women as disadvantaged and excluded from welfare systems and stuck in violent or drug-fuelled relationships was ignored and instead compulsory rehabilitation for clients and women was presented as the way

forward. Issues which Anderson (2002), amongst other feminists inclined towards a sex 'work' position, argue that abolitionist perspectives also neglect.

Moving on to 2008, when the 'Tackling the Demand' aspect of the strategy was in full swing, a six-month review was conducted and government ministers visited Sweden, where it is illegal to pay for sex, yet sex workers are decriminalised. There was a particularly vocal parliamentary group leading the debate that made it quite clear that there was a strong political move towards a complete ban on paying for sex. There was emphasis on making it a crime to pay for sex from anyone 'controlled for gain'. All offences were to be strict liability offences meaning that it would not matter whether the man knew if the woman was being controlled³⁷. Whilst criminalising the demand may seem ideologically sound, the aim being to protect and reduce exploitation, this may not be achievable by proposals in the Policing and Crime Bill 2009 which aimed to re-educate men, resulting in the Policing and Crime Act 2009³⁸.

³⁷ However, due to criticisms of the ambiguous meaning of *control for gain*, there was a change in wording in the Policing and Crime Bill (2009) from 'controlled for gain' to:

"Where a person pays or promises payment for the sexual services of a prostitute, and a third person has, for or in the expectation of gain, used force, deception or threats likely to induce or encourage that prostitute to provide those services. The offences are of strict liability, in that it is irrelevant whether or not the paying client is aware that the force, deception or threats have been used" (Policing and Crime Bill, 2009).

³⁸ The part of the Act passed relevant to sex work stated:

"(1) A person (A) commits an offence if— A makes or promises payment for the sexual services of a prostitute (B), in an encounter where a third person (C) has engaged in exploitative conduct of a kind likely to induce or encourage B to provide the sexual services for which A has made or promised payment, and C engaged in that conduct for or in the expectation of gain for C or another person (apart from A or B).

(2) The following are irrelevant— where in the world the sexual services are to be provided and whether those services are provided, whether A is, or ought to be, aware that C has engaged in exploitative conduct.

(3) C engages in exploitative conduct if— C uses force, threats (whether or not relating to violence) or any other form of coercion, or C practices any form of deception."

(Policing and Crime Act, 2009).

These political results, with a shift in policy targeting female sex workers to that which includes their male clients, have taken place under New Labour. A party under which, masculinity was constructed as a social problem and policy was drafted to control the lawless and threatening men seen to be testing the fabric of the moral social order (Scourfield and Drakeford, 2002)³⁹. Under New Labour men have been constructed negatively in commercial sex policy as in need of ‘reforming’ (Sanders, 2009) Moreover, while certain forms of male sexuality are problematised, other types of sexual consumption are facilitated or endorsed, such as escorting or lap dancing as Sanders argues above (Brents and Sanders, 2010). Thus, there is a double standard based not on protecting vulnerable people, preventing exploitation and promoting safety, but on what are seen as respectable and moral sexualities and the difference between *good* and *bad* sex (Sanders, 2009). Thus paralleling Alexander’s (1997) claim that abolitionist perspectives, so ingrained in policy debates, seek to restrict and regulate women.

In addition to legal and political discourses, Campbell and Storr claim that media discourses about kerb crawling, specifically, construct “clients as dehumanized, dirty and animalistic” (2001: 98), in a return to perceptions based on pathologization. The institutions of law, state and media all contribute to a reframing of clients in a negative light, as abusive exploiters threatening the moral fabric of society. The consequences of this can be seen by Queen’s (1997) claim that, from her experience of interacting with many men who draw

³⁹ Labour Party assessments of commercial sex legislation started off by discussing the introduction of managed zones but are now looking to criminalise men who pay for sex, thereby demonstrating a complete turnaround on policy.

on media constructions based on anti-sex 'work' discourse and internalize a dominant male sex rights discourse; these are the worst clients to deal with. These negative political and media constructions of men who pay for sex, construct clients as different to other men and contribute towards paid-for sex as a stigmatised activity, as will be explored below.

O'Connell Davidson, in criticising calls supporting abolitionist perspectives in political rhetoric draws further attention to the cultural recognition of sex work markets and argues that commercial sex is a 'market' and in order to be analysed the "broader social, economic, political and institutional contexts" in which it operates must be considered (2003: 59). This has been taken on board, and some authors have begun to address shifts within sexual commerce explored above resulting in a shift in research focus which I explore below.

New Research Paradigms

Work on the sex industry and clients reviewed above has offered insights into what has previously been a hidden world, shrouded in secrecy and stigma. However, to continue to locate research in moralistic debates about the rights and wrongs of commercial sex and hierarchical power relations as feminist perspectives are inclined towards, or issues of control and contamination reflected in policy debates, neglects the social, cultural, economic and historically contingent context in which money and sex are exchanged. As a result vital information regarding the mixing of sex and commerce is lost (Agustin, 2007). However, this neglect had begun to be addressed and the relationship between sex worker and client, the cultural context, and the

meaning of what exactly is bought have all begun to be explored (Bernstein, 2007; Lever and Dolnick, 2000; Zalduondo and Bernard, 1995). Issues of pleasure, intimacy and emotion, identity, fantasy, entertainment and leisure, in the context of globalisation and capitalist transformations, have become key themes in a nuanced and sophisticated body of research into sexual commerce.

- Pleasure, intimacy and emotion

As with the dichotomy between commercial and non-commercial sex, there have been shifts in modern understandings of sex itself, as will be explored in more detail in Chapter 3. At one level sex appears to have become conflated with fear, danger and crisis, something in need of control in which there is no room for pleasure, diverse sexualities or sexual experimentation outside of state sanctioned marriage (Attwood and Smith, 2010; Brooks-Gordon, 2010; Phoenix and Oerton, 2005). Yet more recently, in contrast, with the expansion of the global sex industry and further globalising forces of capitalist society, commented on above, sex has come to be seen as a consumable product to be purchased around the globe, across various sites, in various formats, from various actors. It is also used to sell other non sex -related products, from cars and clothes to coffee, on the basis of selling an identity and image to which pleasure and satisfaction are central. Zats (1997) claims that one of the difficulties for sex work is that cultural perceptions do not accept the mixing of sex and money. This tension lies in the notion that money is associated with the *public* world, and sex is associated with the *private* realm of social life. Zelizer (2005) develops this argument further by exploring the connection of intimacy

with economic transactions. She argues that the boundaries in sex work are negotiated with relation to an economic payment and this means that there are differences in intimate relationship as a result of that economic payment.

As has been suggested above, especially by Kinnell (2008), despite dominant stereotypes of all clients as violent, there are significant numbers of clients who are not violent and in fact discourses of friendliness, pleasure, romance and emotionality permeate accounts of commercial sex encounters, especially those pertaining to off street locations. The early work of Holzman and Pines (1982) highlighted the desire for a romantic or social atmosphere, in opposition to a mechanical or cold encounter, in which social or courting behaviours were enacted, with warmth and friendliness as essential characteristics of the sex worker. A simple scan of PunterNet field reports reveals the unsatisfactory nature of mechanical or unfriendly encounters in contrast with the high rates of satisfaction towards friendly and sociable sex workers. Furthermore, Sharp and Earle (2003) claim that for most men, who write field reports, giving pleasure is an important factor in the encounter and most men believed the women were genuinely enjoying themselves. These expectations of reciprocity tend to be spatially contingent and located in off-street locations where sex worker and client can enter into a more equal form of relationship which admits negotiation (Lever and Dolnick, 2000; Sanders, 2008a). Similarly, Zelizer (2005) claims that off street sex workers offer a more intimate service, which includes conversation and attachment, but at a much higher price than street sex workers. Effectively, the client's money allows him to purchase the *illusion* of intimacy.

Indeed, evidence suggests that sex workers do not obtain sexual pleasure from the encounter (see Brewis and Linstead, 2000b; Sanders, 2005a) and that clients are dismissive of sex workers' lack of enjoyment (Plumridge *et al.*, 1997a), rendering the idea of mutual pleasure an illusion. This *illusory* reciprocity may take the forms of an 'authentic' delusion of mutuality, an 'authentic-fake' delusion of mutuality, or 'genuine' mutuality (Sanders, 2008a: 99). The first is experienced via the *acting* of the sex worker: the illusion of mutual pleasure is created, requiring significant emotional labour and skill, and experienced as genuine mutual pleasure by the client. In the second, the client recognises the sexual and emotional labour of the sex worker as part of the service, and, despite being aware of the inauthentic nature of the encounter, experiences it as mutual pleasure. Finally, real mutual pleasure can be experienced by both sex worker and client (Sanders, 2008a: 99).

Drawing on in-depth interviews with both clients and sex workers, Bernstein (2001) argues that clients are challenging the public / private binary, and sexuality and consumerism are no longer seen in opposition. She further argues that for many men, the advantages of the commercial sexual encounter lie in its 'bounded' qualities. Men have access to a literally endless supply of 'unproblematic' sexual encounters alongside their long-term domestic relationships; elements reflective of motivational typologies laid out above. Bernstein (2001) suggests that commercial sex is not simply a substitute for a non-commercial sexual relationship, but a form of 'bounded intimacy' preferred over other relational forms. The transformation of the private sphere, including increasing divorce and decreasing marriage rates, have created a new sexual

climate, which commercial sex can easily cater for. The bounded nature of the encounter is preferable to other affairs due to the clarity of the payment. The women are under no illusion about what is being offered, unlike in non-commercial affairs; it is exclusively a cash for sex encounter with the client having no intention of leaving his long-term partner, or demanding commitment or engagement outside of the commercial context. However, as I argue from my data, these boundaries can shift over time.

The most unequivocal expression of a desire for reciprocity, emotional engagement and intimacy is what is termed the 'Girl Friend Experience' (GFE). Bernstein cites the girlfriend experience as one of the most popular type of encounter, in which the commercial aspect is masked to allow the "client's fantasy of authentic interpersonal connection" to be lived out, although it is precisely this economic element that sets the boundaries of the encounter (2007: 127). A defining feature of the girlfriend experience has been the introduction of kissing, a practice which has traditionally been absent from commercial sex transactions due to sex workers' desire to maintain boundaries (Warr and Pyett, 1999). This practice has become the defining marker of intimacy, emotionality and authenticity (Bernstein, 2007; Sanders, 2008a, 2008b).

Hochschild's concept of *emotional labour*, which refers to "the management of feeling to create a publically observable facial and bodily display" (1983: 7)⁴⁰, is a popular lens through which to view the labour of female sex workers (see Brewis and Linstead, 2000b; Sanders, 2004, 2005a). Lever and Dolnick (2000)

⁴⁰ This is in contrast to *emotion work* which refers to the "act of trying to change in degree or quality an emotion ... the effort – the act of trying – and not to the outcome which may or may not be successful" (Hochschild, 1979: 561).

suggest that sex workers may act out certain emotions attached to sexual acts, such as desire and arousal, which are normally associated with non-commercial sexual relations, in addition to offering other services such as conversation and affection, thus performing 'emotional labour'. Consequently, issues of intimacy, emotionality and friendship have become intertwined in clients' accounts. Sanders draws on the notion of 'male sexual scripts', highlighting the importance of "communication, courtship rituals, sexual familiarity, desire for mutual satisfaction, and the development of friendship and emotional connections" for regular clients, which reflect the features of non-commercial romantic relationships (2008b: 405).

Friendship and emotionality are key features of some client / sex worker relationships (Hart, 1998; Plumridge *et al.*, 1997a; Sanders, 2008a, 2008b). Although it is argued that the client / sex worker relation may be a 'friendship of a kind' (Plumridge *et al.*, 1997a), suggesting a difference from conventional friendship relations, Sanders (2008a) argues that *some* aspects of the relationship are similar to non-commercial friendships. Elements of trust and assistance outside of the commercial encounter, for example with manual tasks, may be present. As with non-commercial friendships, those in commercial sex develop over time based on reciprocity, where both parties benefit and enjoy one and other, beyond the economic benefit the transaction offers (Hart, 1998). However, these strong emotions and friendly relations can be confusing, and present emotional challenges for some clients, as my data also suggests. Clients 'falling in love' with sex workers has been reported (Peng, 2007; Sanders,

2008a), as has the experience of 'being loved' (Earle and Sharp, 2008a). These strong emotional responses can alter the way men interact with sex workers, challenging the bounded nature of the encounter and the commercial / non-commercial dichotomy. Earle and Sharp (2008a) describe how one man called a sex worker back to tell her what a great time he had, whilst Peng (2007) reveals a shift in client practices within commercial encounters, in which clients would allow the sex worker to rest or would perform oral sex on her (which is normally seen as too risky or dirty). Thus, the emotional vulnerability of being a client becomes visible. The resultant confusion experienced by clients, because usually the feelings are not reciprocated, again alter the client / sex worker relation, with clients refraining from seeing the sex worker again (Sanders, 2008a). Friendship, however, was also used to solve some of the confusion that men experienced in relation to paying for sex and helped normalise the experience and present a more positive self identity; men who paid for sex were 'desperate', yet those who fixed the washing machine in exchange for sex were not (Hart, 1998).

This "blurring of the margins" between the commercial and non-commercial (Katsulis, 2009: 11) has changed the face of sex work, away from the image of a cold, empty transaction, presenting a more reciprocal and egalitarian encounter. However, it does raise questions about the difficulties this introduces for sex workers in maintaining their own personal boundaries and the requirement for them to give up more of themselves when engaging in commercial sex.

- Identity, illusion and fantasy

The discussion of political and media debates above concluded by suggesting that engaging in paid-for sex is a stigmatised activity (Goffman, 1968). One in which the individual can become discredited, as will be explained theoretically in Chapter 3. Men who pay for sex are categorised as *different* to men who have multiple non-commercial sexual partners, and this difference is socially constructed as deviant and intolerable (Sanders, 2008a). Sanders highlights the role of legal, policing, political and media institutions as central to the stigmatisation of men who pay for sex. Ambiguous legal positions, misrepresentations and stereotypes attract associations with criminality and deviance, subsume men who pay for sex within *darker* categories of violence and perversion, and construct clients as socially and sexually inadequate. Sanders argues these labels originate in cultural and religious discourses concerning the place and role of sex in society: the differentiation between *good* and *bad* sexual behaviour, the challenge that commercial sex presents to hegemonic masculinity of men as sexually successful, and the undermining of the *specialness* of sex in commercial sex, issues elaborated on in Chapter 3 (2008a: 115-116). The issue of stigma and the men's normalisation practices have been central to the shifting research perspective documented here. However, other work has sought to address the gendered aspect of sexual commerce. By exploring men's attraction to and involvement in paid-for sex, within a heterosexual masculine identity, these authors tease out the complexities of this identity position. Whilst some authors ground their analysis in models of male dominance, they also emphasise how sexual commerce

allows some men to live out dominant cultural formations of a certain masculinity, in which being desirable and sexually successful, challenging characteristics for some men, as Chapter 3 will explore, are seen as central elements of achieving masculine status. I will address the issues pertaining to stigma and normalisation first.

The consequences of stigmatisation are numerous, affecting both personal and work relationships, inducing shame and embarrassment, and attracting negative labels and resultant stigmatised identities. One only has to remember the media storm surrounding Hugh Grant's⁴¹ arrest for paying for sex and his resultant public statement as reported by the Independent newspaper: "“Last night I did something completely insane," he said." I have hurt people I love and embarrassed people I work with. For both things I am more sorry than I can ever possibly say" ” (Helmore, 1995). Guilt, in reference to cheating on a partner, despite fading over time, could be emotionally challenging (see Peng, 2007; Sanders, 2008a). Thus due to shame, guilt, and the legal consequences if caught, male clients go to significant lengths to conceal their involvement in paid-for sex from those outside of the industry. These include the concealment of information concerning researching, negotiating, preparing, and choosing who to visit; the consequent organization of everyday non-commercial activities, and mental strategies of compartmentalization, in which the commercial and non-commercial are separated by drawing on discourses of privacy, separation and distance (Sanders, 2008a: 125).

⁴¹ Hugh Grant was in a relationship at the time.

Until recently, paying for sex was generally a solitary activity which men did not disclose for fear of the negative consequences of the stigmatised client identity. This is not to deny that fact that some clients have chosen to 'come out' to friends, when secrecy and deception were proving difficult to experience and manage. Thus, coming out is a possible move towards seeking both social and self acceptance (Sanders, 2008a). However, the integration of the internet into the commercial sex landscape, has shifted paid-for sex from a solitary to a social activity, transforming the experience of inhabiting this stigmatised identity. Sanders (2008a), amongst others, argues that findings from her study diverge from Goffman's (1968) analysis, in which those who inhabit a similar stigmatised identity are uncertain of one and other. Instead, websites, such as PunterNet, offer men a space for "sexual storytelling in which sexual experiences can become both socially organized and, crucially enmeshed in collectively evolved norms" (Earle and Sharp, 2008b: 269). Consequently, within these spaces male clients are not necessarily required to define their identity (and practices) in terms of negative stereotypes or stigmatised labels. On the contrary, the client identity and paying for sex are in fact normalised and (re)constructed as non-deviant (Blevins and Holt, 2009), the theoretical elements of this collective identification will be discussed in Chapter 3. Solidarity and loyalty becoming visible characteristics between men who pay for sex (Sanders, 2008a).

As Sanders (2008a) argues, within online communities, male clients come together to create solidarity through a sense of group membership based on similarity of shared values and reality, again discussed more thoroughly in

Chapter 3. This sense of solidarity and collective group membership within virtual commercial sex communities has been well explored, possibly due to easy access to such data. The generation of virtual communities' own language or terms such as 'newbies' (new members) and 'bros' (established members) (Williams *et al.*, 2008), and the wide spread use of acronyms within field reports and message board threads, suggests collective identification. Blevins and Holt (2009) examine the 'argot', or unique language used by male clients⁴². By coining and utilising specialized language, derogatory terms referring to actors involved in the sex industry such as 'tricks' and 'hos' can be avoided, further normalising engaging in sexual commerce. Despite Earle and Sharp's (2008b) claim that sexually explicit language is *necessary*, Blevins and Holt (2009) argue that the use of acronyms such as 'BJ' (blow job) or 'A' (anal sex), may be seen as respectful and a method of reducing the negative perception of their practices. However, whilst sex workers' skills are rigorously judged, there is little, if any, mention of men's own performance during commercial encounters when utilising this language. As Williams *et al.* (2008) comment, this may suggest an emphasis on 'comradeship', in opposition to the competition about sexual competency and boasting which is more generally associated with men's talk in non-commercial contexts, as Chapter 3 will discuss

⁴² This unique language has several defining characteristics: its specialized and secretive nature communicates information within the group as well as defining the boundaries of the group, it consists of phrases, acronyms and language, including everyday words which take on a special meaning or the development of new words, and use of the argot correctly signifies group membership, masking deviant and criminal activities from those out-side the group (Blevins and Holt, 2009: 621-22).

Solidarity and collectivity are reflected in the moral order in which paying for sex is located. Within online communities, despite Sharpe and Earle's (2008b) claim that moral debates are absent⁴³, Sanders' (2008a) sample suggests that client attitudes reflect issues of exploitation, danger and morality, topics the men in my sample also addressed concern about. Sharp and Earle (2008b) do claim, however, that clear moral boundaries are present within the online community regarding sex workers' age, violence against the women, and the legitimacy of visiting street sex workers (see also Sanders, 2008a). Thus, these online spaces allow clients to 'benchmark' or provide a set of standards and expectations of how men should behave when performing the client identity, with individual sex workers and as an overall collective responsibility (Sanders, 2008a).

This benchmarking of acceptable standards and 'how to' engage in paid-for sex, is further reflected in the difference between new and established members of online sex sites. There appears to be a disparity between how sites operate, with language reflecting a hierarchy within some online communities. Williams *et al.* (2008) report how, in a Singapore online client community, 'newbies' are initiated into the cultural mores and language with the more experienced members providing this knowledge simultaneously improving their own reputation. Experience is thus crucial in gaining status among other clients online. Drawing on data from a US website, Blevins and Holt (2009) describe

⁴³ This may be due to the fact that the project from which they draw their conclusions was commenced in 1999, when PunterNet began and as such PunterNet was only used to convey information and not to engage in wider social debates of the commercial sex industry which have taken shape since the millennium. They are not clear if all their data is drawn from this year or from later years.

how new members who asked more senior members for assistance, but drew on the unique language of that online community, might increase the likelihood of gaining such information. Thus active engagement in online communities is central to client status online. On some sites, men new to sexual commerce are welcomed into online communities which offer a sense of encouragement and support (Sanders, 2008a)⁴⁴. As argued above, the focus on identity has explored two separate areas, thus the discussion now turns to explore the role of paying for sex in confirming a male heterosexual identity, yet not one only located in a discourse of dominance as abolitionist perspective tend towards, instead drawing attention towards the social and cultural elements of such identification.

Paying for sex involves diverging from a normative heterosexual identity, which will be explored more theoretically in Chapter 3. It invites labels such as perverse or sexually inadequate which challenge hegemonic masculinity. The role of commercial sex in confirming a masculine identity has, however also been tentatively explored. Wardlow's anthropological study of the Huli people in Papua New Guinea, for example, argues that Huli men pay for sex in order to achieve "a certain kind of masculinity that they associate with being modern" (2004: 1028). Yet, the illusory nature of client / sex worker interactions, reflective of the analysis concerning reciprocity above, has been central to work on identity confirmation (Frank, 1998).

⁴⁴Conversely, Williams *et al.* (2008), describe the difficulties that new members may face. They were expected to respect experienced members, gratefully accept advice, learn the language specific to that site, excluded from banter, and, in some cases, accept friendly sexual taunting and questioning of their knowledge of the local sex industry.

Motivations for engaging in the wider sex industry are an insightful starting point for exploring paid-for sex as a particular male identity. How men experience being men outside of sexual commerce reflects the uptake of dominant images of masculinity, shifting gendered relations between men and women, and challenges to fixed gender roles in society. These challenges, which will be elaborated on in Chapter 3's discussion of 'living intimate life', can be summarized as: feeling constrained by gender equality in modern society, where male entitlement is questioned by the rise of female independence and rejection of certain sexual practices or relationships; the emotional, support and commitment demands of *real* relationships and women; fear of rejection; lack of acceptance for some sexual desires and practices; lack of desirability; unconfirmed heterosexual identity; lack of adventure and excitement; questionable financial power and status; sexual performance vulnerability and lack of male virility; and constrained access to women (Frank, 2003; Katsulis, 2009; Martilla, 2008). Frank (1998) argues that strip club patrons are trying to escape *from* these constraints of 'real' life, whilst simultaneously escaping *to* a place where the unobtainable is obtainable.

Within commercial sex, illusion, fantasy and identity production are inextricably linked. Bernstein's concept of "bounded authenticity ... the sale and purchase of authentic and emotional physical connection", in which sex workers manufacture authenticity by presenting the appearance of "genuine desire, pleasure, and erotic interest" for clients, leaves clients with a positive sense of self (2007: 103). The links between fantasy and masculine identity have also been explored particularly within the realm of exotic dance, in which

an 'illusion of intimacy' is created to make interactions appear more real (Frank, 1998).

Wood's attention hypothesis stipulates that the customers in strip clubs "pay to be seen by the women" (2000: 10). It is important for the men to be recognised by the women and to not have to work for attention – practices which men may find demanding in non-commercial contexts as Chapter 3 highlights - with the most economically rewarded dancers being those who effectively simulate intimacy, interest and desire. Men have a certain masculine identity which includes "being desired as a sexual object by others" (Katsulis; 2009: 17). In creating an illusion of desiring the patrons, dancers are able to affirm men's sense of masculine identity. Dancers' techniques for the manufacture of believable relationships involve tricking patrons with scripted lines, such as "you must be *so* responsible" which emphasise masculine traits such as responsibility in the work place (Murphy, 2003: 317). Being able to talk and interact with women⁴⁵ allows men to experience an 'ego boost' through the dancer's conviction that the man is desirable, masculine and successful (Frank, 2003). Within the context of direct sexual services, the expression and confirmation of male virility through being able to physically engage in sex and satisfy one's partner also confirms a sense of masculinity that the men are seeking to achieve (Katsulis, 2009).

Intertwined with the illusion of desire is the entanglement of fantasy and reality in which sexual self identities are exchanged (Frank, 1998: 189). Frank further

⁴⁵ This includes women who would be otherwise unavailable, but also just successful interaction with a woman.

highlights the difficulties in attracting *real* women, the emotional and temporal demands and constraints of *real* commitment, and the fact that appropriate *real* world gendered relational behaviours; elements common to the narratives of the men in my sample, are put on hold. This form of escapism from the *mundane* demands of reality, and the ability to acquire the unobtainable, albeit temporarily, has been constructed as a leisure pursuit (Sanders, 2008a).

However, perhaps paradoxically, the context of interactions between client and dancer or sex worker, whilst may be free from the constraints men experience in the 'real' world, is made up of certain elements and identities of the real world, such as discussions about work, marital dissatisfaction, children and stress. Quite simply the ordinary and mundane of "everyday life intertwines with intimacy and sexual desire", as in non-commercial sexual relations as will be argued in Chapter 3 (Egan, 2005: 88)⁴⁶.

The ordinariness of such relations is particularly visible when notions of friendship, intimacy and emotion are explored, as described above, and central to arguments of this thesis. This shift in research focus to explore the diversity of experiences, recognising that not all sex work is based on abusive or domination / subordination relations, whilst grounding claims (perhaps somewhat implicitly) in a discourse of masculine heterosexuality - a discourse that necessitates issues of pleasure, emotion and reciprocity - leads the way for an analysis that addresses the complexities of the gendered power relation that is commercial sex. Complexities which Brace and O'Connell Davidson recognise, thus calling for "the need for a more complex, nuanced relational

⁴⁶ See Sanders (2008a) also.

vision of gendered power” (2000: 1046) by critiquing radical and sex ‘work’ perspectives, a task undertaken in the final section of this chapter. This critique, when coupled with the theoretical discussion of power in Chapter 3, allows this thesis to address these complexities with *empirical* data from a *client* perspective – a glaring omission of much feminist work which opened this chapter.

Pervasive Power

Power is central to feminist debates on sex work whether implicitly or explicitly identified and indeed feminist theorising in general as Chapter 3 explains. O’Connell Davidson (1998) argues that despite the differing moral and political approaches, both abolitionist and sex ‘work’ analyses understand power as unidimensional. Abolitionists view power as possessed by the client and exercised over the prostitute, whilst sex ‘work’ positions understand the legal apparatus of the state as a central source of power over prostitutes (1998: 16). Radical abolitionists, such as Barry perceive

Women’s subordination ... as the condition of being subject to the direct command of an individual man. Male dominance, accordingly, is a dyadic power relation in which a male super-ordinate commands a female subordinate. It is a master/subject relation. (Fraser, 1997: 225, cited in Brace and O’Connell Davidson, 2000: 1045).

Brace and O’Connell Davidson argue that this dyadic master/ subject⁴⁷ model fixes meanings of sex and gender, masculinity and femininity through rigid models of male power, so producing a homogenous, reductive, ahistoricised

⁴⁷ Brace and O’Connell Davidson term the power relations master / subject, yet for this thesis I term the relationship object / subject.

account which is overly simplistic and neglects the diversity of experience, failing to address the multiplicity of subject positions that women occupy in relation to men (and other women).

However, in opposition to abolitionist perspectives, the agency of some female sex workers (working in both street and off-street locations) has been shown to include strategies such as no kissing, limitation of services and to body parts, insistence on condoms, development of a 'manufactured identity', revealing limited personal information, setting own working hours, selectively choosing and rejecting clients, offering domination services, and making clients come quicker (McKeganey and Barnard, 1996; O'Connell Davidson, 1996, 1998; O'Neill, 1996; Sanders, 2005a). However, some sex 'work' proponents locate analysis among the relatively privileged and within elite white western women's experience of sex work, again failing to recognise diversity.

O'Connell Davidson (1998) therefore argues that the power relations involved in prostitution are more complex than either of these perspectives suggest.

Thus, whilst retaining an eye on the realities of exploitation and its material bases, diversity must be recognised in addition to the uneven and contradictory ways which identities such as 'heterosexual', 'sex worker', 'woman', or 'man' develop in relation to each other and the resultant gendered social relations (Brace and O'Connell Davidson, 2000: 1048). They conclude that as well as recognising diversity of experience, analysis must be located within theoretical frameworks that allow for the identification of underlying structural mechanisms that influence diversity and unity.

O'Connell Davidson's (1998) detailed account of an entrepreneurial prostitute, Desiree⁴⁸, offers an insight into how, in some transactions, it may be possible for the prostitute to exercise greater control than the client. Desiree works out of a private house, employs a receptionist and provides both domination and 'straight' services. She also "exercises a great deal of control over the details of each of her business transactions" (1998: 910). She achieves this in many ways which can be summarized as follows: a contractual arrangement is established early on, which sets out both sex worker and client expectations and obligations; clients pay upfront; Desiree dictates the terms *and* boundaries by refusing to take part in repulsive, intimate, violent or harmful practices that could result in requiring medical attention; she pays close attention to clients' requirements, to encourage them to orgasm quicker; she has methods for clients or non-clients who refuse to pay; having a receptionist provides safety if disgruntled clients try to use force; and she has the ability to retract from individual contracts if she wishes⁴⁹. Consequently, O'Connell Davidson (1998) argues that:

Desiree sets out to forge narrowly contractual, close-ended relationships with clients, in so doing, she imposes limits on the degree of unfreedom associated with her own prostitution. By organizing the transfer of powers over her person in this way, she is able to draw clear boundaries around the client's freedoms and so constrain him in certain ways (1998: 100).

⁴⁸ Desiree has chosen designed and owns the accommodation which she works in, she plans and controls all aspects of her business including advertising, whom to employ, pricing, services offered, the cost of such services and her working hours. (See O'Connell Davidson (1996, 1998) for a more in-depth review of Desiree's business arrangements).

⁴⁹ O'Connell Davidson does not deny the fact that if a man turned up prepared or armed for violence that Desiree and her receptionist would be able to overpower him, and thus enforce the interaction on Desiree's terms, but she claims that most men are not there to fight and are not used to interacting with women who are not physically intimidated (1998: 96).

O'Connell Davidson argues that she is able to do so for three reasons. First, Desiree did not enter prostitution from a position of absolute poverty, thus allowing her to target a niche market in which she can command higher prices. This economic advantage also allows her to work more profitably, in her own premises which offer a sense of physical security and allow her to engage only in safe sex practices. Second, she is not subject to police harassment and is possibly able to obtain a degree of support and protection from the police. Third, her own personal biography in that she is intelligent, assertive, charming and has good social skills, allow her to negotiate and maintain contractual arrangements to her advantage, yet maintain a client base (1998: 101-102). Thus, some sex workers can "set limits on the degree of unfreedom they experience within the prostitute-client transaction, they have certain powers to enforce contracts, and, it is possible for them to make large sums of money" (O'Connell Davidson: 1998: 103).

O'Connell Davidson's (1998) account, which challenges hierarchical models of power (of which a theoretical discussion will follow in Chapter 3), is located in one context, in which the sex worker is in a privileged and advantageous position. Other studies seek to challenge hierarchical models of power by exploring different sex work locations. Sanders' (2005b) analysis of the spectrum of UK indoor markets, details how sex workers generate a manufactured identity⁵⁰ and manipulate their own, and their clients' sexuality to

⁵⁰ She discusses how sex workers transform their appearance and direct their characteristics to match that of the working environment resulting in some women successfully manipulating ideas surrounding heterosexual femininity in order to gain financially. A manufactured identity is thus understood as a resistance tool which allows the sex worker to control her work, yet Sanders does stress that this strategy is not available to everyone and is contextually dependant.

produce a “separate character so they can perform the ‘prostitute’ role as a business strategy” (2005b: 323). Furthermore, Wojcicki and Malala’s (2001) findings of hotel and street sex workers in Johannesburg suggest that while women take part in unsafe sexual practices due to economic necessity, they are still active decision makers in *choosing* to make that choice. To claim the women are powerless hides the decisions they do make and thus the agency they exert at micro levels. Wojcicki and Malala suggest that commercial sex involves a “*power struggle* that already exists between sex-workers and clients in the “game⁵¹” of the sex industry: a [gendered] relation where women exert their agency here at the micro level in the context of structural inequalities” (2001: 155). Thus these accounts, and the notion of a *power struggle*, suggest agency and consequently the notion that *some* women, in *some* circumstances exercise power over both the encounter and the client, rejecting universalistic abolitionist rhetoric pertaining to degradation and dominance.

Therefore, some authors are addressing the complexities within the client / sex worker relation, which O’Connell Davidson (1998) argues have been absent from previous debates, by recognising the multiple and varying power positions that each actor can take within the client / sex worker relation. Work on strip clubs has been particularly insightful in this area and incorporates a more complex view of client / sex worker interactions through demonstrating the fluid and evolving nature of power enacted by both client and sex worker

However, for some women, the exploitation of male sexuality and some men’s desires by adopting an exaggerated feminine identity allows them to be economically dependent and successful business women.

⁵¹ The “game” refers to trying to win the clients and to get them to part with their money (Wojcicki and Malala, 2001: 114).

during performance (Murphy, 2003; Pilcher, 2009; Wood, 2000). However, Pilcher acknowledges that feelings of empowerment for female dancers may be temporally specific, not existing outside of a particular dance or the club venue, and cannot be generalised to all female dancers.

Power is enacted through performance, thus complicating the “object-subject tension: it is a dialectic rather than a dichotomy” (Murphy, 2003: 308). As such, power circulates through the network of relationships forming a dialectic of agency and limitation where strippers are simultaneously objects and subjects. The focus is thus not whether sex workers have power or not, as Chapter 3 will suggest, this analysis of power is inadequate, but how they *negotiate* competing expressions of power which are culturally and socially constructed and performed. Drawing on Zizek’s (1992) notion that watching is an expression of unfulfilled desire, and ‘dialectic of the gaze’, Murphy suggests that the male client exercises power over the sex worker by constructing her as the object of his subjective desires, yet simultaneously, the client is controlled by his very spectator status. The focus of such interactions is to benefit men and confirm cultural prescriptions of masculinity, as described above (Wood, 2000). Yet despite the fact that the men are there watching the women and the women attend to the men, confirming customers’ masculinity and assigning power to that masculinity, the situation is paradoxical. Wood (2000) argues that the dancers’ power to control access to her attention, and affirm masculine power, must be recognised, and overall it is they who controls the interaction in this sense. This subjective power of female dancers is emphasised by the money they make from men who are ‘stupid’ enough to spend it (Murphy, 2003) whilst

still performing as the sexual object of the men's desires. Consequently, the dancers are both controlled as they are watched, yet in control as they are watching.

Despite these authors, recognising the multiplicity of experiences and actors, most feminist analysis focuses on women's economic position and lack of economic resources and explores power relations from the perspective of the sex worker, frequently ignoring client experiences, as Hart (1998) calls attention to. Consequently, at a micro level and in the context of interactions, the mechanisms and processes of power within the commercial sex encounter are misunderstood, as there is little knowledge of how male clients understand and experience power (negotiations / performances) within the encounter and also how these men experience the female sex worker's exercise of power. Some work has addressed these omissions. O'Connell Davidson (1998) makes a significant contribution in moving debates forward. Despite feeling that prostitution is oppressive, she finds presenting clients and other heterosexual men as a homogeneous group, and the blurring of prostitute use with acts of violence against women such as rape, challenging. Thus the *details* of men's and women's interactions, and their *meanings* must be explored. She argues that clients make different sexual demands and eroticize their own prostitute use in a variety of ways that reflect how the man positions himself relative to competing discourses of sexuality, gender and prostitution, which she interprets

explicitly in terms of power⁵². Drawing on interviews with, mostly white, heterosexual male sex tourists, plus other data drawn from correspondence or interviews with other men who pay for sex, she both draws on and distances her analysis from psychoanalytic perspectives. O'Connell Davidson's (1998) findings, which emphasise male dominance, suggest some similarity with abolitionist arguments. In contrast, however the 'respect' that men claim to feel towards sex workers, does suggest that some clients locate sexual commerce within sex 'work' debates, as ordinary work in opposition to violence and abuse (Earle and Sharp, 2008b) and perhaps dominance.

O'Connell Davidson is keen to highlight the 'contradictions of clienting', and that those who pay for the presence of more than a 'paid prostitute' are dependent on the prostitute to confirm this, similar to the performance enacted by female dancers (Murphy, 2003; Wood, 2000). By locating her analysis in a

⁵² She is unclear how much of her data is from sex tourists and how much is from clients paying for sex in the UK and across which sex markets. So whilst insightful, I believe this analysis must be treated with caution and cannot be mapped with any validity onto other UK based sex work client experiences. As such this is included as a footnote as I do not seek to confirm or challenge her findings due to my perception of the difference between her sample and mine, and my desire to distance myself from psychoanalytic perspective instead selecting a more social and cultural approach. It is her emphasis on details and meanings that I wish to draw attention to.

O'Connell Davidson (1998) draws on a discourse of the prostitute as the 'dirty whore', to explore the meanings men attach to the encounter in terms of: hostility in which the client as a man can transgress sexual boundaries yet remain innocent as he was controlled by the 'bad' sex worker; or attraction to the prostitute as a powerful woman who is active, unemotional, and able to control and use her sexuality for gain, which allows the man to objectify the prostitute in order to construct his own specific gendered (masculine and sexual) identity. Furthermore, contact and comfort suggest the ability to select from a 'choice' of women, safely, free from rejection, a pleasure focused on the man's ability to command access to that which other (non-commercial) women have the power to deny him, with some men seeking out prostitutes as an act of revenge against what 'good' women withhold. Finally, the mythical mutuality that some clients seek, is actually a desire to truly control the woman, rather than to contract out her services.

psychoanalytic⁵³ framework, she concludes that men who pay for sex do so as a defence mechanism: defence against anxieties about gender, subjectivity and selfhood. Whilst O'Connell Davidson moves debates forward and empirically explores the meanings some men attach to engaging in paid-for sex, and recognises the diversity of experiences and meanings, this analysis applies only to men who have difficulties in entering into committed relationships in a non-commercial context as they fear being out of control, infantilized, open to rejection and humiliation (1998: 161). Her analysis does not address the significant proportion of men who can and have successfully engaged in committed non-commercial intimate relationships, as I found in my sample.

O'Connell Davidson (1998) fails to offer an in-depth analysis, as she so successfully does from a sex worker perspective, of the negotiations, fluidity and performance of power for men in the actual transaction, as offered by Hart (1998) and Plumridge *et al.* (1997b). Some men interpret commercial sex encounter as having three separate stages of differing power relations, suggesting movement between subject and object positions (Plumridge *et al.*, 1997b). First, the men believed they were in control regarding the decision to actually pay for sex. Second, the negotiation of services and money was left to the sex workers, with the men taking a passive role, and the majority of them preferring the negotiation to be wordless. Third, the actual performance of sex was controlled by the sex worker and the men claimed to willingly accept this lack of control for two reasons. They did not want to feel that the women were

⁵³ She does however, recognise that a psychoanalytic perspective is not enough and in the case of sex tourism, the economic and political inequalities along gender, class and race as well as hegemonic discourse of prostitute women as the 'other' are central.

forced in having sex with them and they respected the women as sexual partners. In addition, the majority of men claimed that they were attentive and sophisticated lovers and were concerned about giving the women pleasure. Most men believed that their performance did lead to sexual pleasure for the sex worker and if she said otherwise then she was dismissed.

Hart (1998) explores power as contested and positive, in opposition to O'Connell Davidson's (1998) somewhat negative account. She argues, similar to above, that many sex workers were able to direct the encounter in the way that they wanted, including being able to manipulate clients into engaging in the sex the sex worker enjoyed. She explains how sex workers used age and other factors to their advantage by taking older clients as they were less work, more grateful, and had less ability to assert themselves. Whilst some women would not go with drunken clients for fear of violence, other women took advantage of their intoxicated state and robbed them of money and jewellery. In contrast to McLeod (1982), who described fixed prices, Hart details the complex price negotiations between client and sex worker: the contextual nature of such negotiations dependant on either actor's biography or present situation⁵⁴, characteristics also present in O'Connell Davidson's account of Desiree's ability to control encounters discussed above.

Hart (1998) also draws on the notion of friendship to explain how both clients and sex workers manipulated encounters and sought to exercise power, thus

⁵⁴ For example, Manoli was involved in selling sex to support her husband's heroin addiction. So, desperate for money, she rarely refused clients and offered expensive services (anal sex without protection) at low prices, to the disgruntlement of other sex workers. However, other women who were not so economically impoverished, reported being able to negotiate the price or refuse clients who would not pay the full price (Hart, 1998).

challenging abolitionist perspectives which assimilate power with dominance and degradation. As described above, a discourse of friendship was drawn upon by both clients and sex workers, which clients manipulated to try to get a reduction in cost or to have a longer encounter, whilst sex workers utilised it for further gain from clients, such as drinks or food. Hart is keen to highlight the *friendly, stable* relations between the sex workers and clients she bases her findings on and that the content of some encounters was based on more than just sex, involving company and conversation – characteristics of the non-commercial.

Thus, the work reviewed in this chapter suggests that sex worker / client interactions are *not* all the same⁵⁵: there are “dominant and non dominant and exploitative and non exploitative clients”. Instead of claiming that all clients are problematic it may be more fruitful to “distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable clients and practices” (Peng: 2007: 334). The evidence that some sex workers are able to manage and strategically resist clients’ exploitation, that some clients locate the sex worker in a discourse of respect and sex ‘work’, and that, some client sex / worker relations are based in discourses of friendship and romance, lay the ground for a more complex analysis of power relations within sexual commerce.

⁵⁵ I am not denying the presence of exploitative practices in sexual commerce, indeed there is evidence of seeking out commercial sex to empower oneself through the objectification of the other (O’Connell Davidson, 1998). See also Hoigard and Finstad (1992) and Jeffreys (2009) for reviews of dominance and exploitative practices within sex work.

Conclusion

This section has laid out the relevant research surrounding sex work. I have shown the debates between abolitionists whom understand sex work as the ultimate expression of male dominance and the counter argument for sex work to be seen as a form of labour. I have show, how, due to processes of globalisation, sexual commerce has shifted especially with the rise of the internet. I have documented what we know about male clients including policy processes in which men who pay for sex are being demonised and presented as monolithic in terms of their practices and experiences. However, this chapter has demonstrated a shift in research away from motivational accounts towards a nuanced understanding of the sex worker / client interaction and relationship, challenging political constructions, instead locating such relations in terms of intimacy, pleasure and emotionality, masculine identity, and fluid power relations. These discourses whilst not denying male dominance seek to move debates forward and recognise that sex work does not always contribute to nor maintain men's dominance over women. The following chapter will seek to explore the social scientific literature that will allow me to explore engaging in paid for sex in terms of heterosexual masculinity.

Chapter 3 – Understanding Men who pay for Sex: Theoretical Tools

In this chapter I will discuss a range of theoretical perspectives on identity, power and heterosexuality, which will be drawn upon in later empirical analyses. By starting with the self and exploring how, through theories of identification, one orders the social world and locates oneself within it, this chapter offers a theoretical overview of how identity is constructed, in relation to others and through reflexive introspection based on notions of similarity and difference (Jenkins, 2008; Mead, 1934; Woodward, 1997), and emphasising its social characteristic and how identity must be validated by others (Goffman, 1959; Jenkins, 2008). I then move on to explore the nature of identities, their plurality and the boundaries between them, highlighting how ‘cultural repertoires’ as resources are used to cross boundaries, and demonstrating the transitions (back and forth) between identities (Lamont, 2001; Lamont and Molnar, 2002). Finally I draw on Goffman (1968) to discuss the consequences and managements strategies attached to inhabiting a ‘stigmatised’ identity.

I then move on to discuss how power has been theorised in the social sciences, and particularly within feminist scholarship. In exploring general theories of power, I emphasise its relational and social characteristics (Wrong, 1968), thus rejecting hierarchical models which suggest that one party holds the power. I draw attention to Foucault’s notion of power and discourse (1977, 1978, 1980) to highlight the social and cultural construction of power relations. I suggest that being able to exercise power is dependent on one’s access to and mobilisation of, resources, in which agency is central (Giddens, 1984; Jenkins,

2009). I then critically address gender, by evaluating feminist theories of patriarchy (Walby, 1989) and hegemonic masculinities (Connell, 2005), and how Foucauldian perspectives have influenced feminist theorising. After laying out these theoretical tools, I apply them specifically to (male)⁵⁶ heterosexuality.

I explore heterosexuality in terms of transitions and relationships, thus again implying fluidity. Heterosexuality as an organising principle can be understood as an institution, identity, experience and practice, emphasizing its plurality, despite heteronormative assumptions (Jackson, 1996). I document the shifts in sexual life and lay out the theoretical terrain to allow for intimacy, friendship and emotion to be understood (Hawkes, 1996; Jackson and Scott, 1997; Jamieson, 1998; Lupton, 1998; Weeks, 2009). I then explore how men live out their intimate lives, demonstrating transitions and fluidity in how men understand sex (Flood, 2008; Holland *et al.*, 1998; Mooney-Somers and Ussher, 2010), experience (or not) relationships (Carpenter *et al.*, 2009; Duncombe and Marsden, 1996; Korobrov, 2010) and experience the mundane practices of heterosexual life (Bennett, 2002; Highmore, 2002; Hockey *et al.*, 2008).

Drawing on these theoretical tools and empirical works, and grounding them in my data, I offer a framework that recognises the cultural and social formation of masculinities in wider society, which has undergone significant and rapid change. By acknowledging the plurality of identities I emphasise the social and cultural resources that men who pay for sex are able to draw on to move between identities, and the tensions and management strategies of inhabiting

⁵⁶ I have put this in brackets as heterosexuality is dependent on both masculinity and femininity for its meaning, practice and experience so it would be hard to talk about only male heterosexuality without suggesting something about female sexuality.

multiple identities. In critically examining heterosexuality, I construct a framework within which to understand how men experience and practice heterosexuality across the life course, suggesting notions of heterosexuality as involving a 'bargain', as being a 'burden', and as located in the mundane. It is through a 'rational management' discourse (Jackson and Scott, 1997), which emphasises the individual pursuit of pleasure, that men are able to make the decision to pay for sex and attempt to control their engagement. However, despite men's attraction to the 'extraordinary', which sexual commerce offers, I suggest that, in fact, elements of the everyday and the ordinary are integral to some men's satisfaction in commercial sex. This challenges hegemonic discourses which insist that the commercial and the non-commercial are in opposition. By exploring empirically men's multiple identities and heterosexual relations, the fluid nature of power becomes clear, especially when it is located in specific and cultural contexts. I provide an alternative approach to power relations between sex worker and client (and wider gender relations) as based on movement across time, requiring resources and exercised at a cost, demonstrating the complexities of power relations and challenging hegemonic discourses which subsume sexual commerce under relations based on exploitation.

Why Identity?

Concerns with identity are at the core of much contemporary sociological work, despite it not being a new concept (Bendle, 2002). Weeks refers to identity as belonging, as what we have in common with some people and how we are

different from others, thus giving: “a personal location, the stable core of our individuality. But it is also about your social relationships, your complex involvement with others” (1991: 88). Jenkins states:

Identity is the human capacity – rooted in language – to know ‘who’s who’ (and hence ‘what’s what’). This involves knowing who we are, knowing who others are, them knowing who we are, us knowing who they think we are, and so on: a multi-dimensional classification or mapping of the human world and our places in it, as individuals and as members of collectivities (2008: 5).

By providing a link between the self and the world that is inhabited, identity offers a place in the social world (Woodward, 2002). Consequently, knowing who we are or who we think others think we are, can be of huge importance: we would be unable to purposefully and consistently relate to one and other without such knowledge (Jenkins, 2008).

The basic processes which allow this form the process of *identification*.

Exploring these processes exposes the ways in which people acquire, maintain and transition through the identities they have. Exploring identity in the context of men who pay for sex offers an insight into the cultural formulations of masculine identity and the multiple identities that being a man in modern society can involve. Thus, highlighting the resources and boundary work involved in the multiple identity positions of male clients. Focussing on identity offers an insight into the wider gender and sexual relations that make up modern life and how people are responding to social change and personal difficulties in contemporary capitalist culture, thus about being a man in wider society.

Theorising Identity

Identity is not a new a new concept. Indeed early theoretical explorations include Mead's (1934) social psychology of "I" and "me", which will be explored in more detail below. However, analytical exploration of identity as a concern occurred during the 1960s, with theorists such as Goffman (1968) raising the issue of 'spoiled identities' through his work on stigma. More recently, there has been a growth in work critiquing a fixed, 'essential core', understanding of identity, and instead suggesting that a fluid and flexible notion is necessary (Huddy, 2001). Phillips and Western (2004) argue that the popularity of identity reflects its analytic scope, which encompasses constructs such as individual, collective, political and virtual, and its association with other key sociological themes including embodiment, difference and resistance. Key theorists have undertaken work to explore issues such as a poststructural emphasis on performativity (Butler, 1990), reflexive modernity (Giddens, 1991), identity as processual (Jenkins, 1992, 2008), how identity is produced and embedded in social relationships (Lawler, 2008), difference (Woodward (1997, 2002) and cultural identities (Hall, 1997). Bendle summarises the key issues of identity as similarity and difference, contextual variability, cultural and historic dependence, subjectivity, social performance and narratives of the self (2002: 5). These issues reflect a social constructionist perspective which views the social world as processual and contingent. I shall draw on Bendle's summary to discuss theories about the construction of identities in terms of similarity and difference, the reflexive self, performance and interaction, and validation and confirmation.

Constructing Identities

- Similarity and Difference

A key theme in debates on identity and identification surround two simultaneous criteria: similarity and difference (Jenkins, 2008; Lawler, 2008). Woodward (1997) focuses on the oppositional nature of identity based on constructions of “us” and “them”. She explores how difference is the critical element in identity construction through “symbolic systems of representations, and through forms of social exclusion” (1997: 29). Nevertheless, to focus on only difference is problematic, because difference does not make sense without reference to similarity, both being necessary for identification (Jenkins, 2008). Jenkins argues that privileging difference in relation to others, and overlooking similarity, means we would only be able to say what we were not, instead of what we are (which would be near impossible). In order to understand our place within, and to organise the human world, an awareness of belonging, community, us or we is necessary: a sense of similarity. Which leads back to difference, because recognising similarity admits of difference. Consequently, Jenkins (2008) argues for a model of identification in which similarity and difference are equally central. This can be seen in the legal, political and sexual health rhetoric discussed in Chapter 2, which constructs all clients as a *similar* (violent or dangerous) group, yet *different* (deviant) to other men who do not pay for sex.

- Reflexivity

Mead suggests that the self is cognitive and resides in the “internalized conversation of gestures which constitutes thinking, or in terms of which thought and reflection proceeds” (1934: 173). Thus, the self is part of self-consciousness. This experience of being a particular person can be seen through Mead’s differentiation between the ‘I’ and the ‘me’:

The “I” reacts to the self which arises through the taking of the attitudes of others. Through taking those attitudes we have introduced the “me” and we react to it as an “I” ... The “I” is the response of the organism to the attitudes of the others; the “me” is the organized set of attitudes of others which one himself assumes. The attitudes of the others constitute the organized “me,” and then reacts towards that as an “I” ... It is due to the individual’s ability to take the attitudes of these others in so far as they can be organised that he gets self-consciousness. The taking of all of those organized sets of attitudes gives him his “me”; that is the self he is aware of (1934:174-175).

The interaction of the internal and external, through the cognitive process by which an individual internalizes external interactions with others, is the process which links the “I” and the “me”; consequently producing the self. “I” come to understand myself through perceiving how “I” am viewed by others as “me”.

This can be seen in research on strip clubs, in which men’s masculine identity is confirmed or denied through their interactions with dancers (Frank, 1998; Murphy, 2003; Wood, 2000). Mead recognises the paradox of separating the “I” and the “me” and claims that they are “separated but belong together” (1934: 178). Thus the self is a social process with these two identifiable phases.

In order for the social process to be recognised, allowing an individual to internalise others’ attitudes and respond accordingly, reflexiveness, “the turning back of the experience of the individual upon himself”, is essential (1934: 134).

The self for Mead, is therefore “a reflexive process of social interaction” (Callero, 2003: 119).

- Performance and interaction

Jenkins’ (2008) framework for understanding identification stipulates *interaction*. Building his argument on theorists such as Barth, Mead, and Goffman and to some extent Giddens, he argues that discussions of identity should focus on the relationships between internal self identification and external categorisation. He defines self-hood:

as an ongoing and in practice, simultaneous synthesis of (internal) self-definition and (external) definitions of oneself offered by others ... the *internal-external dialectic* of identification as the process whereby all identities – individual and collective - are constituted (2008: 40).

Utilising a model of the internal-external dialectic of identification⁵⁷, Jenkins (2008) describes individual identity, embodied selfhood, as being socially constructed via socialisation and interaction. Selfhood is seen as continuous and involved in *internal* self definition and the *external* definitions of oneself given by others, only coming into being through contact with other people. Jenkins maps his dialectic model onto Mead’s (1934) account as follows: I (*internal* identification) refers to the part of the self which responds to others, whereas me (*external* identification) is made up of the attitudes and responses of others as they are incorporated into the self (Jenkins, 1992: 203). This social nature of identity can be seen further by drawing on Goffman (1971) who emphasized the *performative* aspect of identity. In the research summarised in Chapter 2,

⁵⁷ This model of the internal-external dialectic is applied to both individual and collective identification.

sex workers and clients perform certain identities. An example is the 'girl friend experience', where the sex worker performs an identity in which "authentic interpersonal connection" (Bernstein, 2007: 127) is experienced by the client, as he performs the identity of desirable male.

Goffman's (1971 [1959]) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, analyses identity and interaction through the metaphor of theatrical performances.

Interaction is understood as a dramatic performance, in which the behaviour of an individual may influence others. Goffman assumes that when an individual interacts with others, s/he will have a reason for controlling the perception others receive of them. It is through the social process of this interaction that the self is produced. In differentiating between public and private he uses a further metaphor of regions, in which interaction takes place: front stage and back stage. The former is the location where the performance takes place, with actors giving the impression they are adhering to minimum standards. In the latter they do not need to undertake such a performance. Thus the distinction between home (front stage) and the commercial sex encounter (back stage). In the front stage, some behaviours may be frowned upon, or threatening, such as performing an overly submissive sexual identity, as some of the men told me. In the back stage, however, there is no need to mask this aspect of their identity. Consequently, Goffman also refers to *audience segregation* where the actor is sure only to play one of his parts to a given audience in a given setting, and not to play a different part to the same audience in a different setting. As the men in my sample revealed, this may occur more in some cases than others, and some aspects may seep between audiences, thus challenging the separation between

commercial and non-commercial spheres. The management of the contentious relationship between the desired presentation of the self to others, by masking elements of one's biography or situation is also of great significance. This however will be returned to during the discussion of 'spoiled identities'.

- Confirmation and validation

Goffman (1971) argues, that it is not simply enough to perform a certain identity. The performance must be validated or accepted by others in order for impression management to be successful. Thus, invoking Jenkins' (2008) internal - external dialectic, it is not enough for us just to think we have an identity, it must also be validated by others. Consequently identity is not unilateral. Furthermore, an external perception of someone's identity forms part of their internal definition of themselves. In theory the internal and external are as important as each other, but in practice one will always be more important in a certain situation. The research summarised in Chapter 2, describing the centrality of reciprocity within commercial sex, emphasises this: the men cannot experience being a sexually successful male until the sex worker conforms this through the performance of receiving pleasure (Plumridge *et al.*, 1997a, Sanders, 2008a). Jenkins (1992) draws on Barth's notion of *transactional* identities, suggesting that identities involve internal definition, a self defined identity, that people express to others. Although described as internal, this process is social as it requires an audience and an external framework of meaning, or else it is rendered meaningless. However, concurrently, there are also processes of external definition in which one person

defines another, either confirming internal identification, or offering a conflicting definition of their identity which may be imposed on them. Thus Goffman's (1971) 'audience' are an essential part of constructing self identity.

Jenkins draws heavily on Goffman to describe the importance of impression management strategies, highlighting the links between self and public image and the performative and routine nature of identity. Goffman (1971) explains how actors perform different performances in front of different audiences in front and back stage regions. Thus, participants (actors and audiences) work together in negotiating and maintaining a definition of the situation (Tseelon, 1992). The relationship between self (how we see ourselves) and public image (how others see us) creates certain dilemmas, for we do not really know how others see us. Jenkins describes several points of contention here: the audience concealing their opinion about the person; the person hiding information or giving a false performance; poor communication; and, if there is significant disagreement between self and public image, the personal psychology central to the self, may block acknowledgement of the threatening public image (1992: 205). This may allow the illusion of reciprocity, as explored in Chapter 2 by the sex worker giving a false performance.

The Nature of Identities

Goffman's (1971) notion of performance suggests there is no one self, instead there are a range of faces depending on the situation, each activated to a different audience in order to maintain a given definition of the situation (Tseelon, 1992). Lawler (2008) argues that we are multidimensional, identities

are plural, one does not have a single identity and identities are never final. However, different forms of identity interact and are 'dynamic'. She argues that "combining of multiple identities in an additive way ... identities impact on each other, [they are] not placed 'on top' of [one and other]", instead they interact (2008: 3). We do not have a gender identity and on top of that a sexual identity; instead gender and sexuality interact. To be a heterosexual male is different to being a heterosexual women or a homosexual man. However, some identities may be in conflict, for example, 'married man' and 'male client' may be in tension, and produce guilt; as Peng (2007) found, paying for sex challenges hegemonic heterosexual monogamy. This multiplicity of identities can be seen in the impact of globalisation which has lent individuals more fluid, multiple and adaptive social identities. The degradation of traditional structures which allowed rigid identities to be developed opens up the possibility of new identities, formed often within the context of personal and political conflict (Woodward, 1997). To explore multiple and shifting identities the cultural, historical, social and economic context must be recognised (Bendle, 2002: Woodward, 1997).

The fluidity and contingency of identities is highlighted by Jenkins, who draws on Barth to suggest that identities are "found and negotiated at their boundaries" (2008: 44). Barth separates boundary and content (the cultural matter), permitting the differentiation between nominal (name) and virtual (experience) aspects of an identity. Individuals can have the same nominal identity yet different experiences and consequences in their life. Indeed, the demographic profiles of men who pay for sex, as outlined in Chapter 2, suggest

variety across age, relationship status and employment for those who inhabit the male client identity. Consequently, the nominal identity may be the outcome of a particular performance which masks the virtual identity, which is the lived experience of the identity of being a man. Furthermore, the nominal (name) can stay the same yet with the intersection of age, the virtual (experience) may shift (and vice versa). For example, married men get older, they are still married men but they are likely to experience being married men differently, due to embodied changes which may affect intimacy, as will be described later in the chapter.

Claiming that identities are not fixed implies that one can come to identify as someone 'different' to whom one is, as with the example above: with age men experience shifts in terms of responsibility, expectations, physical ability, or illness. This suggests movement into something else and also conjures up suggestions of crossing a boundary. Explicit notions of crossing this boundary have been neglected in the existing accounts of men who pay for sex reviewed in Chapter 2. Whilst Sanders (2008a) suggests that there may be nerves, in crossing from the non-client to client identity, there is an absence of current literature that explores the cultural and social context of paying for sex 'for the first time'.

The notion of boundaries has become a significant concept in the social science of identity, especially ethnicity and hegemonic masculinity (Lamont and Molnar, 2002). The analytic notion of an identity boundary implies a distinction and separation between 'us' and 'them', and concerns boundary processes such

a boundary-work, boundary crossing, boundary shifting, institutionalization of boundaries, and boundary maintenance (Jenkins, 2008; Lamont and Molnar, 2002). Boundaries are constructed via similarity and difference and are maintained through interaction and performances which need to be confirmed and validated. I shall focus on the resources that allow people to cross boundaries, demonstrating how boundaries can be bridged, to further explore how they can be maintained or change.

I shall first, however, highlight key properties of boundaries in the work of Lamont and Molnar (2002) and Jenkins (2008), who draws on Barth and Cohen, to discuss collective identification. Lamont and Molnar claim boundaries are based on the social process of relationality, which Jenkins further highlights by emphasizing Barth's argument that boundaries are:

indefinite, as ongoing emergent products of interaction, particularly between people holding different identities. It is in these ongoing transactions that what is or is not relevant as markers of the identities in question -and what 'being A' or 'being B' means in terms of consequences - comes into being (Jenkins, 2008: 126).

Boundaries are permeable, in that people can cross from one identity to another, they can change over time, thus invoking aspects of nominal and virtual identities and they are contextually contingent (Jenkins, 2008). Boundaries, however, may also be durable: members may move in and out, and changes of identity are possible, yet some identities are routinely stable. The continuity of collectivities, as Jenkins argues, is dependent on boundary maintenance, which is managed during interactions with others across the boundary and recruitment is essential, as members are not immortal. Boundaries concern what people do,

in terms of rituals, practices or behaviours. Thus the content is defined by the common sense, common knowledge and patterns of behaviour shared by those inside, despite the possibility of flexibility and variability (Jenkins, 2008: 129).

Boundaries themselves can be symbolic or social. Lamont and Molnar (2002) suggest that symbolic boundaries are conceptual distinctions produced by people to categorise people, practices, space, time and objects. They separate people into groups, generating feelings of similarity and group membership, as the work of Earle and Sharpe (2008b) and Blevins and Holt (2009) discussed in Chapter 2, concerning online commercial sex communities, demonstrates. They can involve struggles over agreement, and they are essential to how people acquire status and monopolize resources. Social boundaries by contrast, are objectified social differences, located in opportunities and constraints of access to material and non-material resources and social opportunities (Lamont and Molnar, 2002). Social boundaries become apparent in stable behavioural patterns, such as within marriage or groups with differing customs. When symbolic boundaries are commonly accepted they become constraints influencing interaction, and thus social boundaries, such as identifiable patterns of exclusion or segregation. Lamont and Molnar (2002) argue that symbolic and social boundaries are both equally real.

Boundary crossing is dependent on resources, such as cultural repertoires, institutionalized discourse, and the media (Lamont and Molnar, 2002). Many kinds of resources which could allow boundaries to be crossed, include economic resources, technological resources, and knowledge and skills, and it

is beyond the scope of my analysis to list them all. Through drawing on available social and material resources, in a sexualized culture people are able to cross over boundaries, transgressing heterosexual norms. These resources can be used by group members to recruit new members, and bridge boundaries. For example, Bowker and Starr (1999) claim that boundaries can act as an interface, enabling communication across communities (Lamont and Molnar, 2002). For Bowker and Starr 'boundary objects' are material objects, organizational forms, or conceptual spaces or procedures that are located in multiple intersecting worlds (Lamont and Molnar, 2002). For example, the internet as a material object is located across multiple intersecting worlds; the rise of the internet in sexual commerce, as described in Chapter 2, suggests that there is a bridging of identities and communication across boundaries, for example the men who regularly look at commercial sex websites although they have yet to cross the boundary and pay for sex (and may never do so). Thus boundaries allow for communication, exchange, bridging and inclusion (Lamont and Molnar, 2002). However, this bridging of communication is dependent on having access to resources by those who are both inside and outside the boundary. The exploitation of resources in identity formation can once again be seen on the internet. Communities and collectivities no longer have to exist face to face or in the same locality. Whilst Goffman (1971) focused on face to face interaction, the growth of technology (not only the internet, also mobile phones, satellite communication, television, printed material, digital accounts), their accessibility, and the simplicity and speed of

new technologies, allow communities to be developed based on notions of similarity but within different localities (see also Lamont and Molnar, 2002).

These technological developments may have led to the increased maintenance and development of some collectivities, as in the rise of online sex tourism, as described in Chapter 2. Through exploiting technology, reach is greater which means more members can be recruited. Members of deviant or lower status groups may attempt to disentangle themselves from negative stereotypes (Lamont and Molnar, 2002) through normalising techniques such as the development of an argot, as Blevins and Holt (2009) describe. Lamont and Molnar (2002) highlight the importance of exploring how those within a boundary, based on a sense of 'us', feel the need to look after their *own kind*. This in turn draws attention to the encouragement, recruitment, and care of in-group members.

Spoiled Identities

This section explores spoiled identities. There is a need to control who knows about a spoilt identity, and in what contexts it can be revealed, so that the individual can move back and forth between their multiple identities.

- Stigma

Commercial sex can be seen as a stigmatised activity, and those who take part are constructed as different, challenging heterosexual norms, as discussed in Chapter 2. As Sanders (2008a) explains, paying for sex invokes an identity which lies outside the boundaries of prescribed sexual behaviour, resulting in

an associated 'stigma' of fear, disapproval, rejection and shame, if others outside the industry found out about an individual's involvement. The strength of this stigma can present significant, emotional and material penalties, Goffman's (1968) classic work, and newer work by Link and Phelan (2001), help to make sense of this.

Goffman (1968) describes stigma "as an attribute that is deeply discrediting ... [involving] a relationship between attribute and stereotype" (1968: 13-14). A person with, or lacking, a certain attribute is categorised as less desirable and reduced to a tainted or devalued individual with a *spoiled identity*. This attribute is a stigma, made up of the difference between one's actual identity (attributes one does possess) and one's virtual (assumptions about who s/he ought to be) (1968: 2). Goffman, highlights the difference between the discredited and the discreditable; the former assumes that the difference is known about or easily visible, the latter assumes that it is either unknown or not instantly perceivable. If the characteristic becomes known to others the individual moves from discreditable to discredited, suggesting that one may try to manage knowledge of this characteristic, which will be returned to below. With respect to heterosexuality, the hegemonic model of the husband and provider serves to discredit the man who is unfaithful, whether it be with a mistress or a sex worker. He moves from discreditable to discredited if, for example, his wife or work colleagues find out about his extramarital relations.

Work drawing on Goffman has, however, been criticised for promoting an individualised theory of stigma in which stigma, is a thing, a negative attribute,

which is mapped onto people who then become devalued due to their difference (Parker and Aggleton, 2003). Parker and Aggleton further argue that specifically in the context of HIV/AIDS, stigma is seen as static, rather than a changing social process. However, they highlight that these assumptions are not drawn directly from Goffman who was in fact interested in social change and social constructionism. Link and Phelan (2001) critique more current work on stigma for its lack of conceptual clarity and application, and for an absence of accounts of experience. They argue that most work on stigma is individualistic, ignoring structural issues and focusing on those who do the stigmatising. Consequently, they propose a new model of stigma. Drawing on Goffman's position which explains stigma as the relationship between an attribute and a stereotype, they develop the notion of the relationship, seeing it in terms of the way the distinguishing and labelling of human differences take place in line with dominant cultural beliefs, linking labelled persons to undesirable characteristics. Moreover, those labelled are separated by situating them in distinct categories, so creating an 'us' and 'them' dichotomy. Finally, status loss and discrimination ensue, leading to unequal outcomes and disadvantage. It is through social, economic and political power then, that differences are identified, stereotypes constructed, separation take place and discrimination occurs. It has been shown that inhabiting a stigmatized identity can have negative consequences, thus in order to mitigate these, identity management strategies are needed, as discussed below.

- Management

Goffman (1968) focuses on techniques that are used to conceal behaviour and not reveal the 'truth' about oneself. If an individual is discreditable, but their difference is unknown to others, the issue is not managing *tension* within the interaction, but managing *information* "to display or not to display; to tell or not to tell ... to lie or not to lie" (1968: 57). For example, Sanders (2008a) describes the discreditable male client as *passing*, this is "the management of undisclosed discreditable information about the self" (1968: 58). However, if the individual is discredited *covering* is put into action, "an effort to keep the stigma from looming large ... reduce tension ... ease matters for those in the know" (1968: 125-125). The two concepts involve similar practices, resembling the techniques that the men in my sample spoke about, and so will be discussed together by drawing on Goffman's techniques of information control: concealment of stigma symbols, dis-identification, presenting stigma symbols as a sign of another less stigmatised attribute, dividing the world into groups, those who know nothing and those who know all, ignoring (or discreetly managing interaction with) other known stigmatised individuals in public and thus allowing both stigmatised individuals to pass successfully, preventing getting caught, managing 'normal' routines or activities, restricting the display of the stigma, altering behaviours during interaction to minimize the obtrusiveness of the stigma, and distancing oneself from others in terms of relationships, intimacy, and proximity.

However, all social situations are not the same and so stigmatised individuals partition different locations / contexts into forbidden (in which individuals possessing the stigma are excluded), civil places (in which persons of the known stigma are treated as if they were not accepted but in fact are) and back stages (where they do not need to conceal the stigma) (Goffman, 1968: 102-103). This suggests the possibility of disclosing discrediting information voluntarily by displaying a stigmatised symbol, offering evidence through purposeful slips, or strategically offering the information in a way that suggests the recipient is above such concerns, “while preventing them from trapping themselves into showing that they are not” (1968: 124).

- Stigma and power

The social nature of the selection of difference is important, the attributes influencing this selection being historically and culturally contingent. Consequently, it is important to explore cultural categories, how they come about and are maintained, and why some differences are ignored and others not. Some work has addressed this, as explained in Chapter 2, exploring the perception that all clients are violent (Kinnell, 2008) and policy processes (Sanders and Campbell, 2009). The linking of labels to stereotypes draws heavily on Goffman, the label connecting a person to a set of undesirable characteristics forming the stereotype. The consequence of being labelled, and the association with undesirable characteristics, then allows for the devaluing and rejection of individuals, and status loss and discrimination. Link and Phelan (2001) argue that this component of the stigma process has been absent from

previous theorising, with the result that issues of power in the stigmatisation process have been absent from previous theorisation. Thus the group doing the stigmatising possess cultural, social, economic or political power that enables them to generate negative consequences for the less powerful stigmatised group, based on their beliefs. A category⁵⁸ is a collectivity in which members are thought to share some common factor, as identified and defined by others and involves external identification (Jenkins, 2008). External definitions within policy debates described in Chapter 2, present male clients as dangerous. Thus the powerful state seek to constrain the less powerful (men and women) involved in sexual commerce. Parker and Aggleton (2003) further highlight the need for an incorporation of power and domination into understandings of stigmatisation. They claim that stigma produces and reproduces relations of power and control, leading to some groups being devalued and others feeling that they are of a higher status. Consequently stigma is linked to social inequality and so the structures that create and maintain exclusion must be explored. As explained more fully below, drawing on Foucault's emphasis on the cultural production of difference through power, they highlight how stigmatisation is a central component in maintaining social order. This demonstrates the importance of power in collective identification, and stigmatisation, whilst also suggesting that identities can be resisted, forced or defended. Consequently identity is political.

⁵⁸ A group on the other hand is a collectivity defined by the members themselves and involves internal identification (Jenkins, 2008).

Power

Understandings of power, such as the feminist theorising of power and commercial sex described in Chapter 2, have had a long and contentious multidisciplinary history. Debates still rage regarding a definitive conceptual model or definition of power. However, despite the multiplicity of models, power as a concept is a useful tool for sociological analysis, as it allows us to further understand relations and interactions between men and women. More specifically it can offer an insight into male sexuality as constituted through, controlled by and negotiated during men's relations within the heterosexual order, with women and indeed other men, whether direct or indirect.

Power and the Social Sciences

Power has been theorised in many ways, in different contexts, which can, at times, have no common ground. So if there is no agreement about how to define it or measure it how can it be a useful concept to use for analysis? Furthermore, Lukes (1974) argues that how we think about power relates to what we are trying to understand and our purpose should be to represent it in a way suited for description and analysis. Wrong (1968) argues that one of the initial complications in defining power, involves the recognition of its special features as a certain type of *social relation*; whilst also recognising what it has in common with all social relations. In all social interactions people exercise mutual power over each other's behaviour, yet power relations are asymmetrical, whereby the "the power holder exercises greater control over the behaviour of the power subject than the reverse" (1968: 673).

However, to treat power as purely hierarchical, neglecting issues of agency and resistance, as abolitionist feminists such as Barry (1995), Dworkin (1993) and Farley (2004) do, excludes a full set of power relations. Wrong (1968) goes on to argue that during interaction actors repeatedly rotate between power holder (object) and subject, as demonstrated in the context of sex work by Hart (1998) and Pilcher (2009). Consequently, in stable social relations, one actor may control the other in one context whilst the other actor is dominant in another context. As I will demonstrate, a sex worker may control the actual encounter by stipulating what services are on offer such as a refusal to kiss, yet the male client may control the woman's access to further business through the ability to post a negative field report on an internet message board. The division of contexts results from a bargaining process which may or may not have followed an open battle for power. Wrong emphasises the importance of understanding power as a *relation* between two people in a bid to alleviate the problem of seeing power as a capacity vested exclusively in the power holder, and hierarchical.

- Discourse

The relational notion of power as exercised, not possessed, as suggested by Wrong (1968), is present in Foucault's work. Similar to Goffman's emphasis on *performance* in identity, Foucault (1978) views power as performed, something that does something, as a strategy performed in a particular context, not something which can be held. Foucault's rejection of hierarchical top-down models leads him to claim that power "circulates. It is never monopolized by

one centre. It is deployed and exercised through a net-like organization” (1980: 98). Thus, power is a set of relations spread throughout society, rather than located in specific institutions or sets of relations between oppressed and oppressor. Its dispersed nature allows Foucault to see power as part of every interaction, making transparent the mundane and daily ways in which power is enacted and resisted, suggesting agency rather than individuals as reduced to passive dupes of ideology (Mills, 2003).

Foucault’s work on power, discourse and sexuality (1977, 1978, 1980) understands power as pervasive, constituted in the social. He focused on discourse, but in a different manner to the concepts linguistics use. Instead, for Foucault, discourse is “a group of statements which provide a language for talking about – a way of representing the knowledge about – a particular topic at a particular historical moment” (Hall, 1992: 219 cited in Hall, 1997, 44). Discourses are sets of regulated statements which combine with others in predictable ways; they are subject to regulation by rules which lead to the distribution of some statements and the exclusion from circulation of others (Mills, 2003). As Hall (1997) argues, discourse in this manner links language and practices, what one says and what one does; it constructs a topic, defines and produces knowledge, governs how topics can be meaningfully spoke and thought about, and influences how ideas are put into practice and used to regulate others. Thus discourse defines the acceptable, and by virtue of this is constraining, restricting the unacceptable in relation to the topic or knowledge constructed about it (1997: 44). Meaning and meaningful practices are constructed within discourse and Foucault’s claim that nothing has any

meaning outside of discourse does not imply it does not exist *materially*, as critics have argued, but that it has no *meaning*, thus discourse concerns where meaning comes from (Hall: 1997: 45). Thus Peng's (2007) call for distinguishing between acceptable and unacceptable clients and practices, as Chapter 2 described, gives meaning to what should or should not take place within commercial sex encounters. The absence of an 'un/acceptable' discourse does not suggest that these practices do not exist materially, but instead suggest that they have no meaning. Consequently, men who pay for sex would have no knowledge of the acceptable way to behave with a sex worker, as this would have no meaning.

Discourses are historically contingent, and contemporary discourses about sex, the way we talk about it and regulate it, only came into being relatively recently, during the Victorian period (Foucault, 1978). Whilst paying for sex may always have occurred as a practice, the 'modern' male client as a specific *subject* was only produced within the political, legal, moral, medical, and media discourses and practices within the period straddling the millennium, especially a construction of male clients as in need of control as Chapter 2 described. For Foucault, knowledge and practices are culturally and historically contingent, they could not *meaningfully* exist "outside the ways they were represented in discourse, produced in knowledge and regulated by the discursive practices and disciplinary techniques of a particular society and a particular time" (Hall, 1997: 47). The relationship between knowledge and power is represented by Foucault in terms of how discursive practices are applied in specific institutions to regulate others. Foucault was not concerned with absolute truths, but more

with the application and effectiveness of knowledge. Knowledge that has a connection to power, such as that disseminated by the state, assumes the authority of 'truth', but also has the power to *make itself true*: there is no power without knowledge and vice versa (Hall, 1997: 49).

It is through discourses that beliefs concerning relationships and sexual conduct are established and become dominant. Power is inherent within, dominant discourses, produced historically within the context of particular power regimes, as individuals draw on these discourses to construct identities, exercise power or resistance and relate to others. Hence, power is unstable, since it can be challenged at any time. Power relations must be continuously maintained and renewed, as explained by the sex 'work' perspectives explored in Chapter 2, such as the work by Pilcher (2009) and Wood (2000).

Mills (2003) suggests that individuals should be seen as the site where power is enacted and resisted. In further contrast to theories of power in which only oppression is highlighted, for Foucault power can be productive, giving rise to new forms of behaviour instead of simply constraining individuals. Control of sexuality is productive in terms of generating discourses: in music, magazines, radio or television; in medical, psychological, or holistic therapies; in books, biographies, research foci, and university courses; from celebrities and TV stars; and in industries and forms of commercialization. This can be seen in the parallel processes of the rise of commercial sex internet communities and the prohibition of sex work advertising in national newspapers. Without rejecting the structural influences of the state or class, Foucault shifts attention away

from grand overall strategies of power to the local “circuits, tactics, mechanisms and effects through which power circulates ... the meticulous rituals or the micro-physics of power” (Hall, 1997: 50). This shift is similar to the analyses provided by Hart (1998), Plumridge *et al.* (1997b) and Wojciki and Malala (2001), explored in Chapter 2.

- Resources and agency

Jenkins’ (2009) theory of power draws on Wrong’s understanding of power as “intended and effective” (1979: 23). Criticising the totalising nature of previous theoretical work, Jenkins is concerned with the *ways* and *means* utilised to pursue a goal, namely the resources drawn upon. He argues that rather than categorising forms of power and authority, it is more fruitful to work within a broader category of “ ‘power as efficacy,’ how people achieve their ends and fulfil their purposes” (2009: 144). The contextual and locally-based nature of these processes must be acknowledged, as there are many ‘ways and means’ that can be utilised. In addition, a resource in one setting can be a disadvantage in another; for example, the sex worker who may utilise her sexual body as a resource in the commercial sex exchange may be at a disadvantage if knowledge about her sexually available body becomes known in different context, such as applying for rented accommodation, when the local community could ostracise her, fearful that she will disrupt the safety of community life by bringing *dangerous* men to the locality. Jenkins (2009) further explains that in understanding power as efficacy in the pursuit of one’s objectives, agency is central.

Established theorists often denied agency, and saw individual's actions determined by social structures. This typified radical feminist perspectives on commercial sex such as Jeffreys (1997, 2009) and Raymond (2004). However, as documented in Chapter 2, the agency of some sex workers has been made visible through exploring what they do in sex work encounters. Giddens' (1984) theory of structuration attempts to overcome the divide between structure and agency. This is concerned with the *duality of structure* in which agents and structures are not independent: what people do, their practices, are contained within the social systems which affect structures (1984: 25). Thus structure and action are not polarized, but instead one is implicit in the other. Structures are both the medium and outcome of the practices they organise, and are thus internal not external to individuals. Power is exercised as a process of individual's practices and to explore power requires focusing on how actors construct, maintain, and transform their power relations; the 'hows' of power (Davis, 1991: 74). Moreover, structure is constraining and enabling, involving sanctions, yet constituting social life through offering meaning and guidance.

Giddens theory is complex, yet Davis (1991) suggests that the advantage of his argument is that it allows power to be explored through showing how individuals have some free choice, even in unequal power relations or if social structures do constrain individual action, as O'Neill (1996) and Sanders (2005a, 2005b) demonstrate with respect to sex work. Davis draws on Giddens' micro-analysis of power to apply his structuration theory to gendered (face-to-face) interactions. She suggests that power is integral to social interaction, from global cultures to mundane interactions, and involves the resources that

individuals bring to and mobilise during interaction, consequently influencing its direction. Furthermore, power is central to agency: what people do and do not do, what they achieve or do not, and what they might have done but did not do. However, individuals are never completely ruled by social forces, and even compliance is often the outcome of rational assessment of the situation and outcomes. Jenkins model of “power as efficacy: how people achieve their ends and fulfil their purposes” (2009: 144) draws attention towards exploring the ‘hows’ of power. The ‘hows’ Jenkins’ focuses on are resources. Giddens argues that resources are drawn upon and reproduced during interaction and are thus the media through which power is exercised (1984: 16). Although, access to resources is unequal, by exploring the *dialectic of control*, it can be seen that “all forms of dependence offer some resources whereby those who are the subordinate can influence activities of their superiors” (Giddens, 1984: 16).

This raises the question of what we understand as resources. They can be understood as types of capital, which Jenkins (2009) draws on Marx’s notion of ‘value in process’ to explain, thus emphasising their processual aspect, either by circulation or production. Capital is a resource that must be use-able or accessible, which can be mobilised or capable of being mobilised in order to pursue an end, it can be maximised, husbanded, and invested, and has a variable value (Jenkins, 2009: 147-148). What Jenkins wishes to alert the reader to is the fact that resources do not have to be solely economic or related to property. Instead cultural, professional, informational, bodily, and sexual capital all become useable resources. Some sex ‘work’ proponents draw attention to the ‘skills’ that sex workers possess, such as the ability to educate men about sexual

health matters and respect (Alexander, 1997; Queen, 1997). This challenges the idea that because sex workers sell their bodies they are exploited, and the victim status inherent in abolitionist arguments. Instead they can be seen to sell their skills, a construction which suggests agency and more autonomy, and perhaps, as argued in Chapter 2, a less stigmatised identity.

Feminist Perspectives and Gendered Power

Despite the advances in social science theories of power described above, many are acutely gender blind or their theories are abstract and not applied to everyday life. Gender inequality and the connection between gender and power have been key feminist concerns. Understandings of power relations in commercial sex are typically located in the context of gender relations. These gender relations take place during interactions and encounters both in real time and now online, which can be mutually located in commercial and non-commercial spaces, between men and women (and between other men).

However, despite the centrality of gender and power for feminists, theoretical accounts of their interconnectivity have been lacking (Oldersma and Davis, 1991). Oldersma and Davis claim that Millet's (1970) introduction of the notion of 'sexual politics', highlighted the links between gender and power.

Differences between men and women were no longer seen as biological and instead viewed as relations involving domination and subordination. Feminists asked why this came about and what could be done to alter this. By arguing that these differences were socially and culturally constructed, relations between men and women could be located in other socially structured power relations:

“power relations, gender asymmetries were socially produced and reproduced, therefore subject to transformation” (Oldersma and Davis, 1991: 4).

Consequently, feminists made attempts address these omissions by connecting power and gender, for example, both Walby (1989) and Connell (2005) connect gender and power.

- Patriarchy

As explained in Chapter 2, much feminist work focuses on economics and wider gender relations in relation to women’s involvement in commercial sex. These wider constraints on women’s agency in non-commercial contexts should not deny or mask the fact that female sex workers are active decision makers and agents (Wojcicki and Malala, 2001) and that even under structural constraints women are still choosing to make certain choices, even if they privilege economic gain over sexual health protection. In order to understand structural constraints, the concept of patriarchy is useful and indeed reflects some interviewees’ accounts of women’s participation in commercial sex. Patriarchy refers to a network of “social structures and practices, in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women” (Walby, 1989: 214).

Walby (1989) takes on board critiques of theories of patriarchy, which emphasise its inadequacy in addressing historical and cross-cultural variation in women’s subordination, and argues for a patriarchal theory that moves on from the idea that there is only one base of power and instead describes a model that incorporates six partially-independent structures. The six structures represent the most crucial set of social relations that organise gender relations:

“patriarchal mode of production in which women’s labour is expropriated by their husbands: patriarchal relations in waged labour; the patriarchal state; male violence; patriarchal relations in sexuality; and patriarchal culture” (1989: 220).

This will be returned to later in the discussion of heterosexuality; these structures in which male dominance maintains women’s existence in commercial sex can be seen in the abolitionist arguments described in Chapter 2.

- Hegemony

Schotten (2007) argues we that must, however, incorporate men’s construction of themselves in analyses of gender relations and commercial sex. How do men come to be located in positions of power, or not? In order to explore this further, and with the recognition of multiple masculinities and the need to explore the relations between them, the concept of hegemony has been widely used. Studies of hegemonic masculinity sought to explore how “particular groups of men inhabit positions of power and wealth, and how they legitimate and reproduce the social relationships that generate their dominance” (Carrigan *et al.*, 1985: 592). Originating from Gramsci’s (1971) work, which sought to explain how a dominant economic class controls society with the active consent of dominated groups, with or without the use of force, especially by the state (Hearn 2004), this analysis of class relations calls attention to “the cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social life” (Connell, 2005: 77). Connell goes on to define hegemonic masculinity:

At any given time, one form of masculinity is culturally exalted. Hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women. This is not to say that the most visible bearers of hegemonic masculinity are always the most powerful people... Individual holders of institutional power or great wealth may be far from the hegemonic pattern in their personal lives ... hegemony is likely to be established only if there is some correspondence between cultural ideal and institutional power, collective if not individual (2005: 77).

Despite the suggestion that the hegemonic model may only apply to few men, Connell explains that cultural dominance in wider society of a (possibly small) group of men, allows a substantial number of men to gain from the patriarchal divided: “the advantage men in general gain from the overall subordination of women” (2005: 79). He further argues that because hegemonic masculinity is contextual, in its currently accepted state it is susceptible to change and can be resisted by both men and women and is, consequently, a historically mobile relation. The importance of hegemonic masculinity as a theoretical tool is because it suggests the multiple, contested nature of male practices in the context of larger formations of gender structures; it also highlights fluidity, difference and resistance within women and amongst men (Whitehead, 2002).

Related to the hegemonic argument are the notions of subordination, compliance and marginalization. Connell (2005) suggests that hegemonic masculinity involves specific gender relations within groups of men, for example the dominance of heterosexual men over homosexual men, which is seen in not only in cultural stigmatisation but in actual lived materiality through political exclusion and violence. As already stated, not many men actually achieve normative standards. Consequently, we need a way to make sense of

the connection of large numbers of men who do not embody it themselves with the hegemonic standard. Connell suggest this is achievable by:

recognizing another relationship among groups of men, the relationship of complicity with the hegemonic project. Masculinities constructed in ways that realise the patriarchal dividend, without the tensions or risks of being the front line troops of patriarchy, are complicit in this sense” (2005: 79).

He stresses however, that within this complicity there are frequent compromises with women, as the men in my sample said.

As well as gender relations, the intersections with other social divisions such as race, disability or age can place heterosexual men in a marginalized position compared to other men. For example, older disabled men, who are understood as having reduced sexual desires, may be marginalized relative to their younger counterparts in the search for a sexual partner, due to physical and practical constraints and cultural constructions. Discussion of marginalization is an attempt to theorise the relations between hegemonic and subordinate groups relative to the “authorization of the hegemonic masculinity of the dominant group” (Connell, 2005: 80-81). These relations of marginalization and authorization can be seen within subordinate groups. Connell highlights the fluidity of these terms and hence masculinities suggesting those that are not fixed but instead generated contextually within a shifting configuration of relationships.

Despite the usefulness of notions of hegemonic masculinities there have been criticisms about the difficulty of definition and the subjective nature of the concept’s interpretation. In addition, Whitehead (2002) claims there is a need to

move away from a structural analysis, to see the collective nature of masculinities that are individually lived out and to recognise the multiplicity of meanings of masculinity for men themselves, and variations in how it is understood, experienced and lived out in men's daily lives. Further limitations suggested by Cole (2009) include the lack of recognition of the variety of dominant masculinities and how they are interconnected; it is possible to be subordinated by hegemonic masculinity and still utilise dominant masculinities, thus assuming a dominant position relative to other men. Furthermore, the structural emphasis in theories of male power lacks an incorporation of power as organised in complicity and resistance by individuals. Cole (2009) also argues that hegemony is often used in relation to patriarchy and domination over women, thus making little sense in exploring power relations between men. Sheff (2006) addresses some of these criticisms by acknowledging that some men consciously refuse to comply with hegemonic ideals, introducing the notion of resistance. The men in her sample who were involved in relationships with multiple partners, resisted hegemonic ideals by expanding notions of heterosexuality to include elements of male bisexuality and by sharing female partners with other men.

- A grand theory?

Davis and Oldersma have argued that early feminist theorisation was simplistic, with power simply seen as oppression, as asymmetrical relations which were the result of patriarchal structures of domination, as something men *had* (Davis, 1991; Oldersma and Davis, 1991). Despite feminist advances, they argue there

have been few attempts to combine empirical work on gender relations with existing theories of power; the central challenge is how the two should be connected. Davis (1991) argues that within feminist theorising there have been two approaches. First, feminist theory has taken gender as the central concept and attempts have been made to develop a feminist theory of power and gender. Second, power has been taken as the central concept and established theories of power have been mapped onto gendered relations. She critiques both approaches because the former neglects power and the latter gender. She argues that any one theoretical perspective on gender and power is insufficient and instead calls for a feminist theory on gender and power that is empirically grounded, acknowledging Lukes' (1974) call to represent power in a manner suitable for description and analysis.

Komter (1991) suggests that a general feminist theory of power and gender, as a universal feminist theory, could not address the categorical or characteristic aspects of gender. Quite simply, it is too diverse a concept, as are the categories contained within it. Instead, she calls for power to be used "as a specific analytic tool for a specific purpose, not as a general concept for feminist theory" (1991: 48). Highlighting the similarities of power relations within gender and class or race, such as inequality of resources, opportunities, representations and treatment, suggest that, current theories of power maybe useful, if interpreted and adapted from a feminist standpoint, for addressing practices where power and gender are interlinked. This must, however, be grounded in empirical work. Komter argues that focusing on specific instances where gender and power are intertwined, rather than trying to explain whole

categories such as femininity or masculinity, allows “the manifold and subtle interactional and ideological processes which are producing and reproducing sexual inequality” to be made visible (1991: 61).

As Davis (1991) argues, one theory of power can not address the complexities of gendered power relations. Nor, I suggest, can one theory of power adequately address the complexities and diversity of sexual commerce, as the discussion in Chapter 2 highlighted. It is not a question of which theory is best; it is about selecting a theory that can adequately provide a grounded theory of gendered relations as power relations in a specific context. Consequently attempts have been made to integrate the work of Lukes (Komter, 1991), and Giddens (Davis, 1991)⁵⁹. However, within feminist theorising, Foucault has often been drawn upon to show how gender differences both reflect and give rise to unequal power relations between men and women (Davis, 1991). Despite Foucault’s lack of explicit gender integration, and the challenges his theory presents to integrated analyses of structural inequality, Jackson (1996) argues that Foucault’s attraction lies in his anti-essentialist view of power as constitutive of sexuality, not only as repressive. As Komter (1991) suggests, a Foucauldian perspective challenges feminist theory due to its emphasis on the universal power of discourse and the diverse ambiguity of meaning of key concepts like gender and femininity. A focus on ‘women’ and ‘femininity’ in much feminist work tends towards rendering ‘men’ and ‘masculinities’ invisible, as well as their relationship to ‘women’ and ‘femininity’ (Komter, 1991: 47). Komter further suggests too strong an emphasis on the constructed

⁵⁹ See Davis *et al.* (1991) for further examples of this

character of reality inherent within a discourse perspective, neglects other characteristics of individuals, such as their agency and ability to transform meanings and alter social practices. Nonetheless, Foucauldian inspired perspectives dominate and Jackson (1996) argues that Foucauldian analyses highlight the multiplicity and contradictory ways that sexuality has been constructed and regulated. Jackson argues that discourses should be understood as ideological, in that they can veil or legitimate power relations. Discursive constructions of gender and sexuality have produced certain 'truths' which define hierarchically ordered heterosexual and gendered relations as natural and inevitable, thus discourses are connected to the structural inequalities characterising the societies in which they are produced (Jackson, 1996: 26). Jackson further highlights the issue of discourse and individual subjectivity within feminist theorising, such as Hollway's (1984) psychoanalytic approach to exploring how we locate ourselves within discourse, which will be returned to below in the discussion of heterosexuality.

The discussion so far given the nature of this thesis has focused on identity and power in the context of heterosexual relationships. Drawing on Lukes (1974), Davis (1991) and Komter (1991) I shall address the complexities of power relations in the specific context of paying for sex. Even though some men understand some sex workers' involvement in the sex industry as located within patriarchal structures, (Walby, 1984), a Foucauldian perspective intertwined with Giddens' theory of structuration and Connells' (2005) concept of hegemonic masculinity is useful to explore the data gleaned from the participants in my study with regard to their gendered social relations.

Heterosexuality, Transitions and Relationships

Thus far this chapter has explored the more abstract theoretical concepts of identity and power. I have rejected static models, instead highlighting fluidity, multiplicity and transitions. Continuing this theme of transitions, I shall move closer to the lived experience of the data through exploring heterosexuality, rejecting totalising and universalistic notions. Through using my data to emphasise the transitional nature of heterosexuality allows me in Chapter 6, to challenge the commercial / non-commercial dichotomy, demonstrating how exploring commercial sex as a heterosexual practice offers an insight into men's experiences in broader social worlds.

Organising Heterosexuality

Despite the fact that heterosexuality is a major organising principle and is heavily implicated in the way we understand ourselves it is still relatively infrequently recognized and problematised. As Richardson (1996) argues, theorisation is based upon a naturalised heterosexuality which is ignored or invisible and unquestioned. Heterosexuality, despite being constructed as universal and monolithic, natural, fixed and stable, has a diversity of meanings and social arrangements (Richardson, 1996). Hockey *et al.* stress the *pluralistic* notion of heterosexuality, arguing that “hegemonic heterosexuality is both historically and culturally located and, therefore, subject to change” (2008: 162). Furthermore, Smart (1996) argues despite the recognition of diversity, there is still a failure to acknowledge that heterosexuality may be many things, despite the fact that we may need to collectivise the diversity to assist

understandings. This is seen within both sociology and social policy, two disciplines which tend to present heterosexuality as monolithic (Hockey *et al.*, 2008). Queer theory has somewhat lead the way in problematising heterosexuality (see Richardson, 2000), yet much feminist theorising lacks empirical grounding (Hockey *et al.*, 2008). Questioning heterosexuality and its privileged status requires making heterosexuality visible; naming men's practice of paying for sex as a *heterosexual* practice *and* exploring this empirically.

Richardson (1996) argues that heterosexuality is institutionalised as “a particular form of practice and relationships of family structure, and identity. It is constructed as a coherent, natural, fixed stable category; as universal and monolithic” (1996: 2). Jackson, describes how heteronormativity is frequently associated with “the ways heterosexual privilege is woven into the fabric of social life, pervasively and insidiously ordering everyday existence” (2006: 108). Yet she claims that to state that heterosexuality is normative does not provide a full account and leads to deterministic assumptions. Instead, in order to understand heteronormativity, she suggests that we incorporate into analysis, the different dimensions of the social in which its effects and constraints can be seen. These dimensions include; the structural i.e. the patterned social relations at a macro level which dictate social order where gender is hierarchical and heterosexuality is *institutionalised*; the languages and discourses drawn upon which make up our general understandings of gender, sexuality and contextualise meanings in social interaction; the everyday routine social practices where gender and sexuality are continuously (re)generated within

specific locations and relationships and the practices which agents as sexual, gendered and embodied construct, enact and make sense of everyday gendered and sexual interaction (Jackson, 2006: 108). She claims that using these dimensions of the social allows us to see the complex picture of connections between gender, sexuality and heterosexuality that occur within and between dimensions which can be multi - directional and with varying strengths of links. This, further emphasises why a social and cultural analysis of sexual commerce is essential. In order to address the complexities and diversity of heterosexuality, Jackson proposes four organising principles⁶⁰: its *institutionalisation* within society and culture, its associated social and political *identities*, its *practices*, and the *experience* of it (Jackson, 1996: 30).

- Institution and identity

Generally, heterosexual relationships are socially and legally sanctioned via institutions of marriage and the family (Carabine, 2004). Carabine draws on O'Donnell (1999) to further argue that heterosexuality goes beyond individual practices and relationships: it is legally recognised, and structures daily life through the institutions of marriage, reproduction and parenting. Consequently, institutionalising heterosexuality through education, working environments, laws, and taxes gives it superior status over other types of relations.

That heterosexuality is a category divided by gender, and relying on gender for its meaning, is highlighted by Richardson (2000). It relies on a notion of

⁶⁰ It is important to note that this analytical framework is from a woman centred perspective, yet as a method of organising and understanding heterosexuality from a masculinities perspective is nonetheless useful.

difference, a relation based on difference and an attraction based on difference between men and women, and is thus constructed through gender, paralleling Woodward (1997) and Jenkins' (2008) wider work on identity. Feminists argue that this difference is not equal, and that instead heterosexuality is institutionalised by being founded upon a gendered hierarchy (Jackson, 1995). This gender hierarchy incorporates the benefits men gain due to their advantageous position in terms of sexual and reproductive access to women's bodies, underpinned by the marriage contract, and practical and subjective rewards in terms of supporting and confirming a male identity by women's domestic labour (see Jackson, 1995). It also reflects Walby's (1989) patriarchal structures. Furthermore, through discourses and representations of sex as male centred, men are positioned as sexual subjects and women as sexual objects (Jackson, 1996). The role of heterosexuality in sustaining male dominance and female oppression are key concerns of feminist work. However, issues of female empowerment are also central, as seen in both the abolitionist and sex 'work' perspectives reviewed in Chapter 2. Van Every (1996) argues that the hegemonic form of heterosexuality is marriage, in that women are expected to service men; however, there is scope for change in that some women are resisting hegemonic constructions of heterosexuality through having children later or choosing not to marry, thus supporting a Foucauldian perspective on power.

Heterosexuality, due to its taken for granted status, has traditionally been infrequently defined as a sexual or political identity. Nonetheless, many identities that are available to women are constructed within heterosexual

relations, such as wife, mother or girlfriend (Jackson, 1996). However, men's identities can also be constructed in terms of heterosexuality, such as father, boyfriend, and husband. Just as women's identities may be influenced by heterosexual norms, such as the desire to be sexually attractive, so are men's in terms of ability to perform sexually, ability to successfully attract women, and opportunity to validate this identity performance in front of other men. Frank (1998), Katsulis (2009) and Martilla (2008) have discussed this in relation to commercial sex. Despite the social superiority of heterosexuality, not all heterosexual relations and identities are afforded that same status as the ideal heterosexual married couple (Carabine, 2004). For example, relations between adults and children are heavily legally and socially sanctioned, multiple partners are not seen as the norm, single mothers are frequently targeted, and those who take part in commercial sex are stigmatised and sanctioned, as explored in Chapter 2. Despite acceptance of some different types of heterosexual ways of living, such as an increased acceptance of cohabitation, these other heterosexualities are still judged via heteronormative ideals.

- Experience and practice

Feminist analyses of the experience of heterosexuality have focused on sexual aspects, either critiquing or defending it, particularly in terms of pleasure and desire (see Jackson, 1995). However, as Jackson highlights, heterosexuality is about more than just the sexual, it concerns domestic labour, emotional labour, and the daily experience of living out a gendered heterosexual identity. Whilst experience and practice are inextricably linked, practice refers to what we do,

and experience to what is sensually and emotionally felt. In a sexual sense, “the privileging of male pleasure and eroticised power relations involves material bodies, where male privilege is acted out or where we try to negotiate activities and forms of pleasure which challenge it” (1996: 32). However, being able to make sense of experiences depends on discourse, narratives and scripts which allow experience and practice to be linked. These depend on one’s location and available resources.

Feminist debates about (sexual) experience and practice have, unsurprisingly, centrally focused on power, including analyses in terms of the six patriarchal structures, as suggested by Walby (1989). The first structure explores how women do more domestic labour than men without being rewarded. In employment, she argues that women are excluded from the work place by men, or segregated, which leads to the devaluing of their work, resulting in lower wages. Within the state she again argues that there is patriarchal exclusion with significant effects on gender relations, such as shaping divorce and marriage expectations and legislation, and regulating sexual relations (including commercial sex). Male violence need not be located in the individual: that some men are violent allows all men potentially to have power over women due to the general threat of male violence. Sexuality is a key site for patriarchal relations, especially the compulsory and unequal nature of heterosexual relations. Finally, culture refers to the discursive practices located at the institutional level which shape gender relations via experience and subjectivity. Walby differentiates within these structures between public and private patriarchy, with the former locating women in the home, and thus excluding

them from other areas of social life, and the latter allowing women to enter certain sites but collectively subordinating them within these sites.

Understanding Intimate Life

- The liberalization of heterosexuality

As suggested above, heterosexuality is not universal or static: as well as incorporating a range of practices and experiences, it can vary across, time, culture and context. As Weeks argues, “we are living in the midst of an unprecedented transformation of erotic and intimate life” (2009: 13). These changes and transformations are not just taking place at the individual level, they are also taking place collectively, within wider society and the structures that are part of daily lives. The works of Agustin (2007), Brents and Hausbeck (2007) and Scoular and Sanders (2010), amongst others, as documented in Chapter 2, demonstrate these changes in the context of sexual commerce. Hawkes (1996) utilises Elias’s (1969) work on ‘the civilising process’ to describe how over time, behaviours that were socially acceptable, such as sleeping naked, came to be associated with shame and embarrassment. Thus, during the seventeenth century, dressing for bed became the norm. Hawkes describes the civilising process as moving intimacy and sexual activity behind the scenes, from the public to the private, where it became the “special place in the internal ordering of affective emotional life” (1996: 23). These issues surrounding ‘civilisation’ began to influence the domestic sphere in ways that inform contemporary, taken for granted understandings of sexual and intimate relations. The family became private and intimacy was able to flourish behind

closed doors (Jamieson, 1998). Changes such as a decline in fear of death, decreased acceptance of religious intervention and community life, a reduction in male rule over women and children, and an increase in emotional attachments in marriage and parenting, all encouraged this growth of intimacy in personal relationships (Jamieson, 1998).

More recently, the last 50 years has seen significant social changes influencing sexual and intimate attitudes and behaviours including the shift in women's position within labour markets, alternative educational opportunities and reproductive choices, secularisation, which has undermined traditional religious norms relating to divorce, cohabitation and homosexuality, the separation of sex from reproduction and marriage, the separation of marriage from parenting, and some questioning of gender fixity and normal/ abnormal boundaries (Scott, 1998; Weeks, 2009). These shifts can be explained through Hawkes' (1996) four aspects of the liberalization of heterosexuality in which, the contraceptive pill, among other complex processes, uncoupled sex from marriage and procreation, desire became commercialized and choice emphasized, women challenged masculine models of sexual pleasure, and heterosexuality was no longer trapped within the constraints of marriage and life time monogamy. This accompanied the expansion of the sex industry, as Chapter 2 discussed.

The 'sexual revolution', the changes in sexual attitudes and sexual liberalisation occurring since the 1960s (Kraaykamp, 2002), brought a new model of intimate life based on democratic, hedonistic individualism, which was more tolerant, experimental and accepting of diversity and choice than before (Weeks, 2009:

20). Scott (1998) argues that in Britain, between the early '80s and '90s, there were shifts in women's attitudes to pre-marital sex and homosexuality, deeming them more acceptable, and coming into line with men's views on premarital sex. However, whilst some areas are becoming more liberal and gender differences are converging; extramarital sex and infidelity still apparently remain unacceptable in principle, for both men and women. Ironically, it is argued that many of those who condemn infidelity must also be indulging in it, due to its prevalence; despite this, monogamy remains the ideal (Jackson and Scott, 2004).

Thus, today, personal relationships are entered into more for love, pleasure and mutuality than for necessity. A 'pure relationship' is:

where a social relation is entered into for its own sake, for what can be derived by each person from a sustained association with another; and which is continued in so far as it is thought by both parties to deliver enough satisfactions for each individual to stay within it' (Giddens, 1992: 58).

Giddens (1992) describes these changes as the outcome of 'plastic sexuality', understood as a "decentred sexuality, free from the needs of reproduction" (1992:2). However, an increase in freedom presents opportunities for a greater number of sexually intimate relationships, leading to a decline in the number of 'traditional' long-term relationships based on commitment. Love, care, understanding and empathy are less attainable when long-term marriage-type relationships are under threat, and selfish relationships are chosen instead (Jamieson, 1998).

The media and new technologies have been heavily implicated in these shifts, as in the shifting sexual commerce online landscape, described in Chapter 2. The development of new communication technologies has led to a more commercialized, increasingly pluralistic and less regulated sexual culture, nurturing a 'democratization of desire' (McNair, 2002: 11). McNair argues that this democratization involves increased access to all means of sexual expression (such as hard core porn for anyone with internet access), in parallel with the appearance of a more varied and multiple sexual culture than previously located within patriarchal capitalism, such as the growth of 'niche' television aimed at diverse sexual communities. Attwood (2006) calls this the 'sexualization of culture', a multifaceted phrase suggesting many things, including; a contemporary fixation on sexual values, practices and identities; the growth of sexual media; the recognition of diverse sexual experiences; the erosion of some restrictive regulations; a trend towards increasingly liberal sexual attitudes; and an interest in scandalous, controversial sex. Media interest in sex has also been linked to gendered differences, reflecting the sexual double standard of masculine virility and sexual appetite, in contrast to female passivity with the need for caution and discretion (Ward, 2002). The sexualisation of culture suggests shifting boundaries of identities (and practices) hinting at the 'cultural repertoires' that Lamont and Molnar (2002) suggest construct symbolic, and thus social, boundaries around identities.

- Intimacy, emotion and friendship

Intimacy

Before discussing how heterosexuality is experienced, some central concepts need to be briefly theoretically explored. Intimacy is explained as a specific type of “knowing, loving and being close to another person” (Jamieson, 1998, 1). Jamieson goes on to refer to a specific sort of intimacy, ‘disclosing’ intimacy. This requires mutual disclosure between two individuals and the constant revealing of inner thoughts and feelings, in which, as Zelizer adds, this knowledge and attention is “not widely available to third parties” (2005: 14). In many societies, a disclosing intimacy is not the norm and it is only relatively recently that this sharing between people has been associated with a good relationship. Other forms, such as silent intimacy, can be imagined, where couples of few words have great affection for each other and are close to one and other. Jamieson expands on the concept of intimacy by claiming that it can be understood as a form of “close association in which people acquire familiarity that is a detailed shared knowledge about each other” (1998: 8). The trust implied here between individuals can be either positive or negative (Zelizer, 2005). Positive trust supposes knowledge and attention is transferred willingly between individuals, within what could possibly be a risky situation. Negative trust suggests that one individual holds knowledge of another, which if made public could cause social damage to that person (Zelizer, 2005). Trust is often deemed asymmetrical when one individual trusts the other more.

Ideally, however, in true intimate relationships trust should be based on some form of mutuality, as in Giddens' (1992) 'pure relationship'.

Emotions and rationality

The sociology of emotions has recently attracted a great deal of interest from scholars. An initial disregard for emotions resulted from them being perceived as uniquely personal, social forces were thought to have no impact, and from a lack of research surrounding the body⁶¹ (Duncombe and Marsden, 1993; Lupton, 1998). Sociological research into emotions was seen as opposing objectivity and irrelevant, due to the heightened status awarded to "rational thought over irrational emotions" (Lupton, 1998:3). Furthermore, traditionally, displaying emotions was perceived as uncivilised and connected with the lower classes only. However, Lupton (1998) argues that postmodern and feminist critiques of modernism have highlighted the essential and insightful nature of emotions. As emotions cover such a wide range of phenomena, varying in length and intensity, it may be impossible to define them (Jaggar, 1989). However, they are now recognised as central to life and individual subjectivities, with several significant features: emotions result from cultural definitions and social relations and may be evoked by material possessions, and they are physical embodied sensations, which can be described (most of the time) using language (Lupton, 1998).

⁶¹ Emotions were traditionally seen as irrelevant or challenging the privilege of rational thought and were inextricably linked to the body: seen as originating within the individual (Lupton, 1998: 3). The body itself was seen as a threat to the pureness of thought (Lupton, 1998: 3). Lupton argues that the body was initially neglected in sociological work as to include it tended towards biological reductionism.

Jackson argues that emotions are socially constructed and that love cannot exist “independent of the social and cultural context within which it is experienced” (1993: 202). Jackson (1993) places heavy emphasis on the role of narrative and discourse in the cultural construction of the self, whilst recognising that some emotions are developed in our early years through nurturing, or exposure to certain cultural practices. However, these emotions must be analysed within the historical and cultural context in which they occur, and without assuming that some emotions are fixed at a point in child development. Other constructionist perspectives focus on the way social structures, power and group memberships influence how emotions are experienced and expressed, or how the unconscious, the place where repressed thoughts, fantasies and desires are located and which is formed through experience, influence social behaviour (Lupton, 1998).

Within the sociology of emotion, there has been much work focusing on gender differences. Alongside the male / female dichotomy, there are further gendered emotional dichotomies such as rational / irrational and unemotional / emotional (Williams, 2001). Masculinity has been historically associated with rationality, based on Greek philosophical constructs of women as associated with nature and men with reason and the mind, the opposite of nature, thus beginning connotations of maleness with rationality (Ross-Smith and Kornberger, 2004). However, this version of the rational, free male is rife with contradictions challenging rationality and stability from within, thus the self is split based on cultural dualisms of mind / body, nature / culture, reason / unreason, and these

socially constructed dichotomies suggest a self in struggle (Jackson and Scott, 1997).

Jackson and Scott (1997) explore how rationality has been applied to gendered discourses of heterosexuality in an era in which tensions exist between the pursuit of sexual pleasure as a rational life goal, and a version of sexuality as unruly, intractable and resistant to rational management. They argue that what conventionally separated men and women was that both had a 'natural' side, but they were not equally governed by it. Yet sexuality as a *natural yet rational* drive has become more popular, its irrational aspects being separated out as emotion, not sex. Thus "sexuality as a drive is masculine, autonomous, goal driven, rational as opposed to the feminine, emotional side" (1997: 554). Men's control of sexual desire as 'natural' was problematic, yet men were constructed as having autonomous sexual drives, albeit ones which could be actively controlled. Jackson and Scott argue that over time the natural became associated with the biological, and sex became disassociated from reproduction. They draw on Diamond (1997) and argue that, sexual pleasure disassociated from reproduction guarantees reproductive success through forging heterosexual bonds, thus men's sexual desire could be understood as fulfilling a rational purpose (Jackson and Scott, 1997: 557). Sex came to be seen as essential for successful relationships, yet sexuality cannot be so easily dissociated from emotion, especially jealousy, which damages relationships and creates difficulties in trusting a partner. Thus men's sexual excess has been defused by a rationalised approach to sex. However, emotional excess is still seen as dangerous, although the possibility of rational intervention remains

(Jackson and Scott, 1997). If men can control, manage and express emotions properly, their danger is diffused. Rationality has been applied to sexuality and emotion and, within a 'rational management' discourse, the emphasis is on the individual and the pursuit of pleasure is the object of rational governance. This can be seen in the work discussed in this chapter, concerning the liberalization of heterosexual life, and in Chapter 2 concerning shifts towards more individualistic pursuit of pleasure, in opposition to 'moral conservatism' which emphasises the social and moral order, and the special place of marriage (Jackson and Scott, 1997: 569).

Friendship

Friendship has been a relatively neglected area in the social sciences; because of a lack of conceptual clarity, the range and diversity of friend-like relations have not always been acknowledged (Pahl and Spencer, 2003). The notion of 'friend' is relational, suggesting sharing either activities, events or talk, elements of trust and loyalty, reciprocity, support either physical, emotional or financial (Allan, 1998; Pahl and Spencer, 2003; Walker, 1994). However, all friendships are not the same, and Pahl and Spencer (2003) suggest a range of relationships, including neighbourly friends, where contact is limited to small favours, close friends, special soul mates, and high or low maintenance friends. However, friendship is not only personal it is social; it is framed by context, the economic and social formations in which it occurs (Allan, 1998).

Furthermore, friendships are not static: "as these contexts alter, the material and social relationships in which individuals are embedded change, so to differing

degrees will the character of their friendships” (Allan: 1998: 700). Thus, over the life course, as an individual’s situation alters so does the content, basis and location of their friendships. New jobs, moving house, and intimate relationship breakdowns, impact on friendships. Furthermore, younger people form friendships based on ‘going out’, whereas later on friendships are formed around family and children (Pahl and Spencer, 2003). The changes in sexual attitudes and practices, described above, and those pertaining to the sex industry described in Chapter 2, parallel shifts in friendship formations, based on increased flexibility and connections forged around leisure interests, with shifts in technology and globalization meaning that locality is no longer a key marker of friendship.

As well as the supportive elements of friendship highlighted above, friendship has a more central role in identification. Allan (1998) argues that a basic element of friendship is that each party treats the other as equal, even if they recognise differences between them. Thus friends are likely to be located in similar social and economic contexts and have a broadly similar social status, thus implying the sense of similarity that Jenkins (2008) argues is essential to identification. Through building links with those who are similar, one can affirm one’s own identity and thus friendship involves more than support; it involves defining oneself (Allan, 1998). Allan argues when changing or developing new friendship networks, new friends may offer support associated with the new context, and through interaction or taking part in joint activities the shift in identification is confirmed. Furthermore, as the new identity is accepted, further friendships are likely to develop with those in similar

circumstance, further confirming that identity position (Allan, 1998: 696), as the work discussed in Chapter 2 regarding online communities suggests. It is important to note that despite the notion that friends know the 'real self' and not the instrumental performances, Goffman's (1959) back and front stage respectively, different friends may perceive that 'reality' in different ways (Allan, 1998). However, as Goffman (1959) explains, some performances may be managed so that a certain reality is displayed in front of some groups and not others, including different groups of friends. However, in commercial sex, it is not so black and white. As my data in subsequent analytic chapters demonstrate, the boundaries between the commercial and non-commercial are permeable and elements of each seep into the other sphere. These elements of intimacy, emotion and friendship were threaded through the men's narratives about both their commercial and non-commercial experiences of living intimate life, which is the final theme I will discuss.

Living Intimate Life

As with most discussions around sexuality, heterosexuality is taken as 'natural' or the norm. But there is not one masculine heterosexual experience: male sexuality is not the same for all men, and there is no single shared experience. Instead, there are a variety of different emotions, strengths and weaknesses, pleasures and pains present in each man's sexual experience (Segal, 2007). In order to understand men's sexual behaviour and attitudes it is also essential to understand the influence of men's individual understandings of themselves as masculine and explore their sexual subjectivities (Whitehead, 2002). Kimmel

(1994) argues that the dark side of male sexual attitudes and behaviours such as prostitution, oppression, objectification of women and rape, results from men being ashamed of their own sexuality and holding a deep-rooted fear of being exposed as less than a man. Consequently, “to achieve full masculine status young men must separate themselves from homosexual and feminine identities” (Allen, 2003: 226).

- Sex

Much work on male heterosexuality is limited to adolescent and young adulthood, framed within a discourse of sexual health, focuses on gendered power, or explores sexuality through medicalized discourses such as impotence (Mooney-Somers and Ussher, 2010). However, the social and cultural factors shaping emotions, desires and experiences surrounding sexuality have been acknowledged (Weeks, 2003). And it is becoming increasingly recognised that heterosexuality is involved in the experience of childhood, in addition to adolescence, as children live out gendered identities of ‘boy’ and ‘girl’ through their interactions and identity work: gendered identities are formed in school via interaction with one’s peers and friendship circles (Renold, 2000, 2006). However, Jackson argues that sexuality is learnt in a society in which ‘real’ sex is defined by vaginal heterosexual penetration with an active subject (male) and passive object (female) (1993: 23).

Learning about sex involves a multitude of methods and sources, including sex education from both formal and informal sources of knowledge, theory and information, and embodied experimentation and practice (Holland *et al.*, 1998).

Informal interactions with one's peers is supplemented by the actual *doing* of sex in some instances, and Holland *et al.* argue that embodied sexual practice is possibly the fundamental learning experience for young people. Reluctance to offer education that covers aspects of sexuality other than purely biological or reproductive elements is misleading, and, furthermore, reinforces the sexual double standard of active male and passive female sexual roles. Holland *et al.* suggest however, that there is an assumption that young men do not learn about sex, instead they "somehow 'just know' about it" (1998: 59).

Holland *et al.*'s 'male in the head' model of sexuality, in which heterosexuality is not "masculinity-and-femininity in opposition: it is masculinity" (1998:11), has been a useful way of understanding young men, sex and gendered power relations. In this model, female desire is neglected, emotion is rejected, and only the physical is important. The works of Holland *et al.* and Allen (2003) suggests that at an early age this ascription to a normative heterosexuality serves to subordinate young women and reinforce appropriate performances of a masculine identity through heterosexuality. This hegemonic masculinity constructs male heterosexuality as sexually assertive, emotionally detached, and with unlimited sexual desire (Allen, 2003), implying notions of compulsory heterosexuality, homophobia and misogyny (Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2003). As Frosh *et al.* (2002) argue, young men may recognise what constitutes the hegemonic masculinity within their culture and may position themselves relative to this during their own process of identity construction. Following an essentialist model of the male sex drive, male sexuality is thus constructed as a powerful, uncontrollable force (Allen, 2003; Weeks, 2003), seeking access to a

limited resource of female sexuality (Baumeister and Vohs, 2004) and based on a traditional gendered heterosexual requirement to be 'better than other men' (Maxwell, 2007: 555). Overall, a lack of education or mis-information from peers results in models of masculine sexuality which focus on male pleasure and power within sexual relations with a lack of emotional engagement, the 'male in the head' (Holland *et al.*, 1998) demonstrating how patriarchal culture and patriarchal relations in sexuality are constructed and maintained (Walby, 1989).

A common theme in work on boys/ men's sexual subjectivities centres on the role of hegemonic heterosexual and hegemonic masculine norms. Allen (2003) argues that young men draw on dominant sexual discourses whilst producing their sexual identity, including sexual assertiveness, emotional distance, possession of a wild sexual desire, and ownership of a body that ensures the young men's satisfaction, in line with a Foucauldian perspective of power and discourse. Allen argues that this construction of their sexual identity led young men to publicly portray themselves as appropriately masculine through the institution of heterosexuality, emphasizing sexual attraction and activity. She suggests, however, as Foucault emphasised, that some young men do resist dominant heterosexual discourses when involved in sexual relationships, denying that sexual activity was the main motive for entering into, or remaining in a relationship, and instead locating their desire in a discourses of love, intimacy and commitment, which are feminine traits. These findings suggest that even though the young men do desire certain 'feminine' traits from intimate relationships such as love and intimacy, they are still very much drawn

towards the more 'traditional' masculine characteristics of the heterosexual relationship especially those associated with sexual activity.

Again drawing on a Foucauldian inspired perspective of gendered power, Hollway (1984) draws attention to two main heterosexual discourses; first, a male drive discourse, stipulating a natural sexual drive in men which makes them want to have sex with women. Hollway claims this drive is understood as normal and healthy as it ensures the continuation of the human race. Second, a have / hold discourse where sex is an element of a much wider committed relationship between a man and a woman, leading to bringing up a family. Hollway argues both these discourses are heterosexist and emphasise reproduction. Braun *et al.* have identified a third discourse in Hollway's (1989) later work, a permissive discourse. They argue the permissive discourse understands sexuality as neither harmful nor wrong, for either men or women and as such 'anything goes' so long as neither gets hurt (2003: 238). Similarly, Mooney-Somers and Ussher (2010) suggest four '*certain truths*' about male sexuality, which the men in their study drew on. First, there was a desire for (more) sex, not necessarily more enjoyable or pleasurable sex, thus suggesting Hollway's (1984) male sex drive discourse. Thus for some men, sex was constructed as a physiological need, like food, and women were positioned as denying men sex with resultant male health consequences. Second, sex was understood as a bodily experience, with everything else (emotion, relating and meaning) categorized as sexual. This silenced relational aspects, with women being reduced to a 'thing' to satisfy male sexual need. Third, gender stereotypes were drawn upon in which men experienced sex as physical and women as

emotional, constructed through either embodied difference or social and political constructs of women. Finally, men saw their sexual urges as in need of control, presenting the possibility of deviating from heterosexual norms.

Being able to draw on discourse requires being a social individual, and the homosocial bonding between men has been highlighted as producing certain understandings of sexuality (Flood, 2008). It is acknowledged that men's interactions with other men influence men's sexual relationships with women. Flood argues that women are used to cement bonds between men, in that heterosexual experience is an important route for achieving masculine status, and thus identity, and it is through these bonds, based on a sense of similarity, that men make sense of themselves as sexual and gendered beings (see also Holland *et al.*, 1998). Furthermore, shared heterosexual practices, such as exchange of pornography, consolidate these bonds. Messner's (2001) work on male athletes argues that the influence of peer groups results in pressure to be seen by one's peers as a man, and to see oneself as a man, through certain performances which need validating. Within the peer group women are objectified, and discussions loud and aggressive, utilising abusive language. Serious discussions concerning relationships with girlfriends took place away from the group and, if discovered, the men involved were goaded into revealing intimate details about their girlfriend's bodies or sexual activity. Peer groups are therefore seen to influence the production of an unromantic, sexually obsessive / aggressive or negative masculinity in boys, in addition to placing heavy demands and raising concerns regarding sexual performance (Messner, 2001). Thus homosocial bonding, reflects how patriarchal structures and

hegemonic masculinity are constructed and maintained through men's interaction with other men (Connell, 2005; Walby, 1989), supporting the 'male in the head model' (Holland *et al.*, 1998).

- Relationships

Men's emotions

Gender differences around emotion suggest that men are unemotional and women emotional. Indeed, evidence supports this, as can be seen in the above work in which boys and men construct sex as a physical activity and necessity, alongside rejecting discourses of romance and failing to acknowledge their female partners needs or desires. Seidler (1992) argues that men grow up identifying with the public world of work, advocating independence and self-sufficiency. Thus male identity is sustained through not needing others' help, and to digress from this, to show vulnerability, is a sign of weakness and a threat to male identity. As described above, the rationalist tradition identifies masculinity with reason, and Seidler argues that men reject the emotional aspects of their identities, unless they know that these feelings can be rationally justified. Mansfield and Collard's (1988) study of newlyweds demonstrated that husbands were not as intimate in comparison with their wives, failed to discuss romance, and discussed love only in the context of sex (cited in Duncombe and Marsden, 1993: 224). Seidler argues that if men do not acknowledge their own emotional needs, it becomes harder for partners to rely on them; women may feel that their emotional needs are overwhelming in comparison and that they carry the emotional aspect of the relationship. He further suggests that if men

identify with their rationality, as the men in my study did, in order to address relationship challenges, the results can be impersonal and removed.

Duncombe and Marsden's (1993) own work with heterosexual couples revealed that men claimed that they did have feelings, but that their feelings belonged to them and should not be disclosed, suggesting that men do have emotions, which they choose not to reveal. Seidler claims that this difficulty in communicating openly stems from perceived 'correct' feelings and behaviours in relationships, suppressing unacceptable or unwelcome feelings and leading to a difference between inner experience and outer expression (1992: 11). He goes on to argue that because men have denied their emotions for so long, reconnection poses challenges in terms of being fearful that others would actually be there for them, and that men's needs could appear overwhelming for their female partners. The work on men's friendship as will be discussed below, seeks to challenge the stereotype that men are emotionally inarticulate, and, as Seidler suggests, as men learnt to communicate with other men they realised they shared similar issues.

Gender has been a common differentiator for exploring friendship differences, with stereotypes presenting women's friendships as intimate, based on sharing feelings through conversations and men's portrayed as sharing activities, because intimacy threatens masculinity by its association with femininity (Walker, 1994). However, this dichotomy has been challenged and Walker claims that men's accounts of friendships suggest that men do talk about things that men were not supposed to talk about, such as relationships, feelings and

emotional problems. Furthermore, the men's actual practices of friendship challenged stereotypical norms, as telephone conversations were utilised to maintain long distance friendships, men went shopping together, and trust and loyalty were essential criteria for a friendship. Thus Walker concludes that despite cultural ideologies that are reproduced through socialization with friends, others and the media, many men (and women) do not fit cultural ideologies of friendships. This can result in feeling either deficient or validated, depending on how they position themselves.

Cross-sex friendships have received relatively scant attention in comparison to same sex relationships. However, Afifi and Faulner (2000) argue this absence has begun to be addressed. O'Meara (1989) argues that cross-sex friendships are seen as deviant by those audiences directly affected by them (spouses) or those who feel they transgress social norms. Furthermore, there are no social norms for cross-sex friendships which present challenges to do with emotional bonds, sexual behaviour, inequality, and public presentation. Thus cross-sex friends engage "in a process of developing a working consensus on a shared definition of meaning of their friendship through the management of self-presentations and altercastings⁶² on both private and public levels of the relationship" (O'Meara, 1989: 540). However, social norms in cross-gender friendships suggest that men place a higher demand on their friendships with women than on those with other men, and are less judgmental of male than female friends.

⁶² There is no dictionary definition that I could find for this word, I am interpreting it as meaning different roles.

As O'Meara (1989) states, sexuality is a key site of contestation within cross-gender friendships, with cultural norms devaluing sexual relationships within friendships. However, Afini and Faulkner (2000) report that over half their sample claim to have had sex with a cross-gender friend with no intention of entering into a relationship with them at that time, and a third report taking part in such activity on multiple occasions. Many of those who took part in sexual contact "experience it as a relationship enhancing, but also recognize the activity as part of the friendship, rather than as a behaviour that accompanies a change in relational definition" (2000: 218). Not to say that all sexual contact is positive; some negativity concerns uncertainty about the friend's feelings or intentions. However, when experienced positively sexual contact lead to an increased confidence about the friend's intentions and feelings and may help to improve the relationship. I shall return to this in my discussion in Chapter 6.

This work suggests that men are capable of experiencing and articulating emotions within friendships. Allen (2003) suggests that within intimate relationships, some young men are challenging hegemonic discourse of heterosexual masculinity and constructing relationships from emotional discourses of love and intimacy. Forrest (2010) suggests that, when taking part in committed relationships associated with love and emotional investment, young men distanced themselves from other young men's 'immature' version of masculinity, which centralises sex for its own sake. Overall, young men do apparently have the capacity to talk about their emotions but are unpractised at it, deterred from doing so by a competitive male culture, and with other avenues for expressing emotion such as physical exercise (see also Seidler, 1992). The

men in my sample, for example, did speak about their emotions, with varying degrees of fluidity, yet they were able to articulate them more eloquently through notions of friendship (cross-and same-sex) than intimate relations.

Time and age

Reference has been made throughout this thesis to fluidity. In a parallel view, intimate relationships are not static over time and with changes in individual social or economic positions, such as retirement, or birth of children, and wider cultural shifts, such as those pertaining to the liberalization of heterosexuality (Hawkes, 1996) relationships change. Bertone and Camoletto (2009) highlight the fact that the continuous processes which produce and change adult masculinities through daily sexual practices remain unobserved. Drawing on an interactionist perspective, they stress, with Jackson (2006), that heterosexuality is about more than just sexual acts and instead wish to move towards understanding sexuality in terms of 'doing' gender, and sexuality and heterosexuality as socially understandable actualities and practical accomplishments. Thus, with the recognition of sexuality as an identity, comes the scope for recognising the fluidity and multiplicity of heterosexual experiences. Bertone and Camoletto (2009) found that structural changes, such as women's shifting social positions, impacted on how men made sense of their gendered biographies. They draw on Gagnon and Simon's (1986) notion of sexual scripts and find that there is a movement between scripts. For example, in adolescence a predatory, 'sex as naturally driven', script was found amongst

all the men, yet on transition to adulthood, the men were expected to take up the 'respectability' script.

Within marriage, as the relationship changes, continued sexual activity is associated with greater marital satisfaction (Ashkam, 1994). Carpenter *et al.* (2009) claim that with age women report less physical and emotional sexual satisfaction yet men claim to have increased emotional satisfaction. Without denying the fact that some long-term partnerships may be satisfying, Duncombe and Marsden (1996) argue that most long-term married couples suffered a decline over time in sexual relations, passion and intimacy, due to a range of factors: physical illness⁶³ of either spouse and the knock on effects from medication; disability; poor mental health; physical difficulty in taking part in sex for both men and women such as impotence; women's reduced sex drive, lack of interest and ageing body; strains of modern life including children, or partner unavailability due to working away; familiarity (Ashkam, 1994; Carpenter *et al.*, 2009; Duncombe and Marsden, 1996; Mooney-Somers, 2010). Mooney-Somers and Ussher (2010) argue, that for partnered men, leaving the relationship is not a viable option, often due to the presence of children within that relationship. A decline in or restricted access to sex, was located within a discourse of women as *barriers* to sexual access, for the reasons mentioned above. Consequently men sought to fulfil their needs elsewhere, either through masturbation or seeking sex outside of the relationship, with the former framed as a *coping* mechanism and the latter as something one is *pushed* into, (reflecting the feelings of the men in my sample) (Mooney-Somers and Ussher,

⁶³ Illness can refer to acute episodes of physical illness or general decline in health that comes with age, not relating to sexual function.

2010). Not all of these difficulties are present in partnered or older men, and, as implied above, young men's access to women can be constrained. So how do men managed these difficulties and the resultant vulnerabilities?

- Negotiations

Men negotiate being heterosexual in terms of their relationships with other men, women and themselves. Part of negotiating heterosexual life involves drawing on dominant discourses that suggest that men *want* sex; yet, for some men, this is not an easy or straightforward task. Mooney-Somers and Ussher (2010) claim that men position women as gatekeepers, constraining access to sex until the appropriate work or practices have been done. They refer to men having to decipher women's demands and fulfil them through such practices as buying drinks, showing an interest, or emotional and financial support. The sex-related practices they describe, such as buying sex toys, however, are based on assumptions about women's pleasure, rather than communication with partners about their desires.

Despite men constructing themselves as competent and knowledgeable lovers, sexual activity and relations can be a particularly anxious experience (Mooney-Somers and Ussher, 2010). Fears over performance, technique, women's resistance to 'emphasized femininity'⁶⁴, meeting embodiment norms, reciprocity, emotional involvement, rejection, hurt, and uncertainty are all

⁶⁴ Emphasized femininity refers to compliance or receptivity with respect to men's sexual advances and desires, emotional caretaking, and passivity (Korobov, 2010: 7) Women's resistance to this include resisting men's advance or being non compliant, resistance to commitment or being main emotional caretaker within the relationship or being sexually promiscuous, being aggressive, or initiating sexual joking.

present (Braun *et al.*, 2003; Holland *et al.*, 1998; Korobov, 2010; Maxwell, 2007; Seidler, 1989). Failure to take part in heterosexual relations can result in failure to successfully adhere to the hegemonic masculine heterosexual identity, which can render men vulnerable in terms of identity and also to experiences such as bullying and homophobia (Holland *et al.*, 1989; Mac an Ghail, 2003). These vulnerabilities can be managed through performances (not always located in homosocial bonding) such as boasting to peers and women to affirm one own sexuality, objectifying and degrading women, coercion, cultivating female desire through consumption, and blaming women (Flood, 2008; Mooney-Somers and Ussher, 2010).

However, Korobov (2010) argues that there is little empirical research that explores how men *negotiate* women's resistance, suggesting mobile gendered power relations as Giddens (1984) and Foucault (1979, 1980) have drawn attention towards. Korobov shows how men negotiate vulnerability through self depreciation, by self mocking to place oneself as a 'victim' to women's resistance. Through humour and nonchalance the men appeared confident despite rejection and avoided other men's taunts or sympathy. Gender-norm scripting was drawn upon to again place men as 'victims' when women acted aggressively after they had been treated badly by the men. The women's behaviours and personalities were constructed as irrational and crazy in contrast to the men's who were seen as stable and victimized if the women physically attacked them. Korobov claims further gender-norm scripting was drawn upon with women who refused to commit: it was her erratic / irrational disposition, not his. However, in some cases, this was constructed as a false resistance:

when she eventually submits to his advances it emphasises his conquering ability (Korobov, 2010). These analyses demonstrate fluid, mobile gendered power relations, highlighting women's resistance and gendered negotiations. Whilst patriarchal constructs and hegemonic masculinity are explicit, the processual nature of power on the part of individuals is emphasised, suggesting agency. These accounts draw attention to the everyday, ordinary routine practices and interactions involved in heterosexuality. This notion of heterosexuality as part of the everyday is explored below.

- Ordinary or extraordinary?

Feminist work has begun to recognise the importance of heterosexuality as a contribution to the organisation and understanding of daily life. The rise of interest in daily life results from two main contradictory processes: the democratization of cultural and political life, and new forms of social discipline (Bennett and Watson, 2002). Bennett and Watson also argue for a third process, social movements, such as feminist concerns with women's life within the home. The everyday refers to the routine, familiar, mundane, insignificant, repeated and ordinary day to day aspects of people's lives (Bennett and Watson, 2002; Highmore, 2002). However, the everyday is a site for "making the unfamiliar familiar; for getting accustomed to the disruption of custom; for struggling to incorporate the new; for adjusting to different ways of living" (Highmore, 2002: 2). Thus, the extreme is absorbed by the mundane and the new becomes old; the exceptional is thus at the heart of the everyday. Highmore argues that modern life is filled with boredom in work and at home,

routinised, regimented, monotonous, uniform and dull, and bureaucratic and policed. Yet mystery, the strange, the fantastic, the exotic cultures that make up *other* people's everyday life, are catalogued and displayed within the everyday that individuals all experience, offering glimpses of the extraordinary that is out there.

Similar to power and identity, the everyday can be seen as dialectic, both extraordinary and ordinary, thus presenting a paradox. It has been argued that the everyday is evasive, and its articulation problematic, yet, as Highmore argues, to treat it as experience that is unavailable for reflection or representation silences it, while to locate it in current or available discourse and representation suggests that nothing exists outside of these, nothing which reflects the shifts in modern life and uncertainty. Understanding the everyday concerns defamiliarising the familiar (Bauman and May, 2001) exploring the voices, materials, sensations and processes of the everyday (Highmore, 2002). Cultural studies has been productive in offering critiques of everyday life, with an emphasis on power and how the everyday is a site of resistance, suggesting the influence of Foucault's (1977) micro-physics of power. However, the lived actuality of the everyday is absent, thus the first task should be to bring it to the fore. By exploring everyday practices such as domestic routines, or sexual identity, the everyday is able to generate new political forms.

The *mundane* aspects of heterosexuality have been recognised in the work of Hockey *at al.* (2008), in terms of the everyday practices that are incorporated in heterosexual life. Drawing on heterosexuality as a social identity, structuring

everyday life, they suggest that *non*-sexual practices are fundamental to understanding heterosexuality as an identity, experience and practice. They further argue:

In that hegemonic heterosexuality involves the proximity of bodies – and, indeed, their production and reproduction; the spatial segregation of the couples and eventually their children; and the materiality of shared eating, sleeping and washing arrangements – can we begin to understand it as one of everyday life’s key organising principles (2008: 143).

Furthermore, individuals generate heterosexuality through sets of everyday practices, rather than following scripts. However, they claim that it is through the mundane that extreme experiences can be remembered and articulated. I wish to highlight the “interactive relationship between the mundane and extreme” (Robinson, 2008: 129). Robinson, through the sport of rock climbing, highlights how the extreme influences and effects the mundane, through offering relief from the stress, rush, boredom and frustration of daily life, in conjunction with creating tension in relationships or constraining life chances. Furthermore, by exploring the everyday nature of the practices of rock climbing, the extreme become the mundane and routinised, contrary perhaps to Hockey *et al.*’s claim that the mundane helps people understand extreme events (see Hockey *et al.* 2008). Despite their slightly different approaches, both imply a connection between the mundane and the extreme, that extreme practices can become mundane and how the mundane seep into the extreme.

This paradox of the mundane, its interactive relationship with the extreme, can be seen in romance. Whilst romance can be constructed as taking place in the everyday, and routinised in practice and experience in coupledness, casual

flirting or daydreaming, and as familiar through cultural texts, it can also transform the everyday into something 'magical', out of the ordinary (Redman, 2002: 55). Redman argues that romance is inextricable from the everyday, and in opposition to it. Romance and intimate lives are lived out within the home and Bennett (2002) argues, the home has been seen at the main site for everyday life, a place of repetition and ordinariness. As I argue through my data analysis, the daily living out of heterosexuality can be understood as located in the ordinary, compared to the 'extraordinary' which is what commercial sex is perceived to offer in terms of excitement, risk, variety, the dramatic, the intense and the extraordinary (Redman, 2002: 71). However, from the narratives of the men in my sample, the paradoxical relationship between the extraordinary and the ordinary comes alive. Despite their perceived opposition, they are inextricably linked, the mundane seeps into the extraordinary, and vice versa. To understand heterosexuality involves defamiliarising all those practices, of routine daily life that so often go unnoticed: the cups of tea, the shared or lonely meal times, and the conversations about daily routines, which, as Egan (1997) and Sanders (2008a, 2008b) argue, are central to men's commercial sex encounters.

I have looked at a wide range of topics and have done so to lay the theoretical foundations for the analyses in Chapter's 5, 6 and 7, in which all of these topics will be revisited during the discussion of my empirical work. The following chapter begins the move away from the work of others, introducing my project in more detail by documenting my methodological choices and practices.

Chapter 4 -Methods

Researching sex is problematic, regardless of the topic under investigation. Sex work in particular has a specific set of characteristics that make research into this area challenging and complicated. Nevertheless, sex work research is now an established area of study, exploring the whole spectrum of the industry to include exotic dancing (Egan, 2003), male sex work (Whowell, 2010), adult entertainment premises, (Hubbard *et al.*, 2008), and male clients (Sanders, 2008a). This chapter provides a reflexive methodological account of how I went about exploring the experiences of men who pay for sex with women in the UK between September 2006 and August 2010.

Research Questions

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, there is little known about clients' lives outside of the commercial sex encounter, or their subjective relationship experiences within commercial sex⁶⁵. Starting from the premise that male clients do not exist only in commercial sex contexts, instead belonging to broader social worlds, I wanted to understand these men's relationships and sexual lives, not only within but also beyond the commercial sex transaction, thus adding to the growing body of knowledge about paying for sex and locating male clients more broadly in contemporary sexual culture. This resulted in four main research questions as outlined in Chapter 1.

⁶⁵ For an exception see Sanders (2008a) as reviewed in Chapter 2.

Reflexively Approaching Sex Work Research

Among other things, sociology as a discipline was born out of a “concern to understand the “other” ” (Vidich and Lyman, 2003: 56). This projects’ overarching aim, to further understand the *other* in the shape of men who pay for sex, took Mills’ sociological imagination as a starting point, aiming at understanding “history, and biography and the relations between the two within society” (2000: 6). To fully utilize the sociological imagination required a specific epistemological framework. As I was interested in exploring subjective experience it was necessary to generate what Geertz (1973) calls “thick description”⁶⁶. So instead of simply *describing* what men were doing when paying for sex, this approach allows the *meaning* of acts for an individual, such as losing one’s virginity, experimenting sexually or seeking companionship, to be understood from a man’s perspective. The variety of men who engage in paid-for sex, the multiplicity of their motivations, and the heterogeneous nature of heterosexual life suggest that there is no single, objective reality of sexual experience. The aim of the social researcher is to understand how these multiple realities are constructed and interpreted (Campbell and Wasco, 2000). In order to achieve this thick description of a possible multitude of realities, an interpretive epistemological framework was necessary. Interpretivism, drawing on Weber’s concept of *verstehen*, which emphasizes ‘interpretive understanding’ of action, seeks the subjective meaning of action (Bryman, 2004). As argued above, a single objective reality of sexual life has been rejected, and therefore a constructivist approach was taken up. Constructivism

⁶⁶ Thick description explains behaviour and the context of that behaviour so it becomes meaningful to those outside that context (Geertz, 1973: 5-6).

implies that “social phenomena and categories are not only produced through social interaction but they are in a constant state of revision” (Bryman, 2004: 17). Bryman (2004) further argues that an interpretive epistemological stance, where the social world is understood through an examination of the interpretations of the world held by its participants, and a constructivist position which suggests that social properties are dependent on interactions between individuals, rather than simply ‘out there’ and independent from their construction, are inherent characteristics of a qualitative research approach. My goal was therefore to describe life worlds “from the inside out”, from the point of view of those who participate (Flick *et al.*, 2004: 3), to explore engaging in paid-for sex and wider relationships from the perspective of the men involved.

From the outset I decided that in-depth, semi-structured interviews were the best method of gaining the information I required. Kvale suggests that interviewing in qualitative research “is a specific form of conversation”, which generally involves the researcher directing questions to a participant (1996: 19). Located in constructivist approaches, the qualitative interview’s purpose is to allow the researcher to formulate interpretations and thus understand the meaning of participants’ experiences (Warren, 2002). The social and interactional nature of qualitative interviewing underpins Plummer’s (1995) notion of sexual stories, in which the researcher is part of the process of constructing the story and thus becomes part of the process of constructing sexual knowledge. Plummer refers to research accounts as personal experience narratives, “in which people put their own sex lives into a story” (1995: 15). The story produced is interwoven within life stories, resulting in “personal

narratives that are socially embedded in the daily practices of everyday life” (1995: 15). Furthermore, sexual stories are “socially produced in social contexts by embodied concrete people feeling the thoughts and feelings of everyday life” (1995: 16).

One of the origins of this emphasis on the co-construction of knowledge is feminist methodological principles, which significantly guided this research project. Gorelick (1991) argues that feminist methodologies grew out of feminist concerns about the invisibility of women as researchers or participants and, critiques of mainstream social science methods and purposes. The present feminist research project focuses on understandings men’s lives and their experiences of taking part in what some see as an oppressive patriarchal practice, neither condemning nor condoning these men and their behaviours. This decision reflects arguments that the problematisation of women’s diverse lives, and the institutions framing them, which is central to feminist work (Olesen, 2003), does not provide a complete picture of social life. This was highlighted by Scully (1990), whose work with male perpetrators of sexual violence suggests the need for feminist work to not only focus on women’s lives, but to also bring studies of men’s worlds into the analysis, if patriarchal ideologies are to be challenged.

With the development of feminist research the invisible came to be made visible, and those at the margins were centralised: furthermore, the trivial became crucial (Reinharz, 1992). Epistemological questions to do with ways of knowing, who can know, and what kinds of things can be known, were also

raised (Harding, 1987). With this came the recognition of multiple knowledges, highlighted in the work of black feminists (Olesen, 2003). The shift from critiques of traditional methods and institutions and the absence of women's experiences, to concerns with difference, a rejection of universalistic notions and recognition of the importance of the researcher's positionality, came about in part due to work on disability and lesbianism. However, postmodernism and deconstructionism also brought these complexities to the forefront (Olesen, 2003).

Since the 1960s reflexive practice has gradually risen up research agendas and the social context in which knowledge is produced has begun to be acknowledged. Feminist methodologists have argued that knowledge is contextually specific and the researcher's biography affects what they find and, therefore, what we know (Stanley and Wise, 1993). Additionally, there is now an increasing awareness that "how knowledge is acquired, organised and interpreted is relevant to what the claims are" (Altheide and Johnson 1994: 486⁶⁷).

It is thus important to recognise that research is a complex social interaction and the relationship between researcher and participant influences all stages of the research process from recruitment to findings. Indeed, as Plummer (1995) highlights, when researching sexual and intimate lives the researcher is part of the process of generating private sexual stories and bringing them into public view. Interrogating intersubjectivity increases the trustworthiness of qualitative

⁶⁷ See also Widdowfield (2000) and Holland (2007)

data (Finlay, 2002), so we must account for the role of the researcher, as an individual, in the generation of knowledge throughout the research process. The position of the researcher is now seen as fundamental to the research process, and Presser argues for a strong reflexivity to “expose ... the relations that influence the construction of the story that is told” thus including ourselves into the analysis by presenting “open reflexive accounts of the research process” (2005: 2087).

Despite the recognition that research that is not reflexive is no longer acceptable (Plummer, 1995), Kleinmann and Copp argue that reflexive work tends to be published only when the “professional coast is clear ... when we are less vulnerable to others’ criticisms” (1993: 17). Such accounts are missing from research more generally, due to a desire to present ourselves as objective and neutral. Furthermore, even though there is now an increased awareness of the need for reflexive practice, Broom *et al.* (2007) argue that the majority of reflexive writing in qualitative research focuses around women as participants, and there is much less work exploring male interviewees. In addition, there is only limited work on the intersections with gender and other factors such as age, sexuality or status.

In addition to researcher influence which is thought to stand in opposition to a value free science, concerns relating to validity which have long preoccupied quantitative researchers, have recently risen up qualitative research agendas

(Cho and Trent, 2006)⁶⁸. Issues of validity generally concern ‘trustworthiness’ of the data (Golofashani, 2003). Or, what is the truth status of the men’s accounts? On what basis can we trust what they have said? Many qualitative researchers have manipulated quantitative measures and applied them to qualitative projects. I have not done that, but I can describe to what extent the men who took part in my study provided valid data. First, the transcripts are truthful as accurate reflections of what the men *said to me*. Second, it is not possible to judge the ‘truth’ status of such claims, reasons for which explaining is beyond the scope of this thesis. But there were five practices that I undertook to ensure that the data were ‘truthful’ representations.

- (1) I checked all the transcripts for contradictions. Anything that was contradictory that I had not been able to enquire about in a follow up interview was treated with caution.
- (2) I paid attention to how the men said what they said, for example if they were upset, excited or frustrated.
- (3) I assessed these accounts against other accounts in the literature and what other men were saying online.
- (4) I checked what the men were saying against each other’s accounts.
- (5) I drew on my researcher intuition and trust.

Understanding validity as a process, and thus as “ever present and recursive as opposed to a step in a linear sequence or an over- reliance on subjectivity” (Cho and Trent, 2006: 327), an open account of methodological decisions and

⁶⁸ There have been several attempts to address validity in qualitative research such as the works of Lincoln and Guba, 1985 and Kvale, 1996 (see Bryman, 2004 and Golofashani, 2003 for a further discussions on validity in qualitative research).

choices, which allows the reader access to the subjective processes will be presented, to demonstrate the steps taken to ensure the validity of the research process.

The Self and the Study

Before providing a reflexive account of the research process highlighting its gendered context, power relations and the role of emotions, it is necessary to first locate myself within the research (Cylwik, 2001). I am a white, well-educated female who was in a long-term, long-distance heterosexual relationship prior to the project starting. At 26, I was relatively young, compared to the majority of participants who were 50 years old on average, ranging from 29 to 69 years of age. However, some participants were not aware of my age, as we never met; some I never even spoke to, since I used MSN Messenger⁶⁹. I was asked my age out of curiosity by one participant over the phone. My relationship status again varied from participants, since I had never been married and have no children. However, I have had several significant heterosexual relationships. My identity as a relatively young, PhD student, working in a professional academic environment, was at times significantly different from that of my participants who ranged from being older academics with PhD's to younger unemployed men with no qualifications. As noted in Chapter 1 I had almost no prior personal experience of the sex industry.

⁶⁹ MSN Messenger is a free instant messaging service provided by Microsoft. It allows people whom have a Windows Live ID (e.g. a hotmail account) to sign on and communicate in real time.

Methodological Challenges to Sex Work Research

Researching sex work has been fraught with challenges, due to the stigma attached to its subject matter, the perceived dangerousness of participants, and the barriers faced in reaching hidden populations. These methodological challenges mean that researching male clients is a 'sensitive topic':

research which poses a substantial threat to those who are or have been involved in it ... [furthermore] sensitive topics present problems because research into them involves a potential cost to those involved in the research including, on occasion, the researcher (Lee, 1993: 4).

Consequently, there are common problems with ethical approval, access, recruitment, prevailing stereotypes, and researcher safety during research encounters in the field (Melrose, 2002; O'Neill, 1996; Sanders, 2006a, 2006b; Shaver, 2005). Researching men who pay for sex has further methodological barriers due to their stigmatisation and desire for anonymity; Plumridge *et al.* (1997a) for example stated that the majority of their participants declared they had never told anyone about their activities before. There are also a number of legal ambiguities surrounding the industry (Sanders, 2008a). These revolve around the confusion that paying for and selling sex between consenting adults within certain spaces is not actually illegal, instead it is certain activities that are associated with such practices that are legally sanctioned, including soliciting in a street or window and kerb crawling. These ambiguities were further exacerbated, for this project, by the political climate in which tackling the demand for commercial sex became a government priority (Home Office, 2008). The legal review, in conjunction with the murder of five sex workers in Ipswich in 2006, constructed male clients as potentially violent, dangerous men

(Kinnell, 2008; Sanders and Campbell, 2009). Thus, the research was conducted during a time when paying for sex was the focus of much public negative debate, scrutiny and stigma, giving rise to a set of distinct practical challenges that had to be negotiated.

- Participants: Access, recruitment and protection

Despite such barriers, a variety of successful projects about male clients have been undertaken, using a range of methods for access, recruitment and data collection. These have included using sex worker accounts (Lever and Dolnick, 2000; O'Connell Davidson, 1996); working through sexual health clinics (Ward *et al.*, 2005); training brothel staff to conduct surveys (Plumridge *et al.*, 1997a; Xantidis and McCabe, 2000); undertaking on-street interviews (McKeganey and Barnard, 1996); using media advertisements (Grenz, 2005); large scale surveys utilizing kerb-crawler re-education programmes (Monto, 1999); red light area observation of cars (Hoigard and Finstad, 1992); police interviews for secondary data (Sharpe, 1998); content analysis of commercial sex websites (Earle and Sharp, 2008a; Holt and Blevins, 2009); and using the online community to recruit for participants (Sanders, 2008a). For my own study, I considered a range of access approaches, eventually putting out a call for participants on an online commercial sex message board, supplemented by an article in the local paper.

By observing a regional website, similar to PunterNet (which during 2006 was open access and required no password to view the message boards⁷⁰), I located and contacted a moderator. The use of gatekeepers⁷¹, in this case the moderator, and confirming one's identity as a genuine researcher by offering detailed information about the study, in order to be allowed to post a message on the site, has previously been a successful recruitment method in other studies (see Sanders, 2005a; Reid, 1996). My initial email did not appear to be successful, as there was no reply (which I interpreted as a negative response). Despite the fact that on other message boards, no response meant that this initial stage of the recruitment process was exceptionally tense. Failure at this preliminary stage could have resulted in a total rethink of the project. However, on observing the board some weeks after the initial email had been sent, there was a post at the top of the main board which read "FOA[sic] of N Hammond". The post explained that my email had been received, but all replies were bouncing back, and asked me to email a phone number and I would be called. From this point on, recruitment followed a much smoother process. A phone conversation with Angelina⁷², the moderator (and also owner) of the message board, who was also a female sex worker, resulted in her becoming the gatekeeper and facilitating the research. She allowed me to post a message (see Appendix 1) to request participants and posted one herself, confirming that she had spoken to me, that I was a genuine researcher, and encouraging people to take part. I was,

⁷⁰ This changed part way through the project and a logon identity was required to view any of the message boards.

⁷¹ See Liamputtong (2007) for a full review of using gatekeepers to access hard to reach or vulnerable populations.

⁷² This is a pseudonym.

however, informed that some members of the group had been researched before and she was not sure of the response that I would receive.

Access to the message board was a promising start, yet no participants were guaranteed and I was already familiar with Angelina's warning of the possibility of saturation. Due to the hidden nature of this population, these websites provide previously denied access to this world and are becoming more popular and more widely recognised by researchers, as discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. Consequently, a local newspaper was also contacted and they publicised the research and included a call for participants (see Appendix 2).

I had gained the trust of a gatekeeper, yet it was imperative that trust was also established between myself and potential participants (Liamputtong, 2007). As all initial communication was via email, apart from one anonymous handwritten letter, I did my best to use this medium to foster trust in the research relationship. I also provided genuine university research contact details on all correspondence, I provided a link to a personal university web page, and explained the research in detail, including the promise of confidentiality and anonymity. The British Sociological Association's (2006) principles of informed consent and confidentiality were adhered to, and informed consent was sought using a standardised form containing all the above information as part of an information package (see below) that participants were sent upon enquiring.

Electronic communication presents new challenges for obtaining informed consent. However, if a participant chooses to fill the form in and sends the form

back via email, even without typing their name in the signature area, this is understood as explicit consent (see Madge, 2007). To ensure confidentiality and to protect anonymity, the information that participants disclosed was protected by safe storage⁷³ of material, in both hard copy and electronic format, and the removal of any unnecessary identifiable features in the transcribed data. Furthermore, each participant was given a pseudonym⁷⁴. Using email, potential participants were able to enquire anonymously, and research relationships developed through correspondence, participants asking questions that helped to allay their fears. With most participants several online exchanges took place before the interview, so promoting mutual trust.

Once the message had been posted and the newspaper article published, there was an instant flurry of activity of people enquiring about the project, which was a positive sign! Participants were sent a generic email in return and an information package, comprising an information document describing the project (Appendix 4), an informed consent form (Appendix 6), and some sample questions (Appendix 5). Interested participants were asked to send an autobiographical account of their experiences of commercial sex. This filtering process was designed to reduce the number of inappropriate research participants and ensure that participants were not fantasists and did genuinely take part in commercial sex (Sanders, 2008a). I decided to let participants choose what to discuss in their biographies to establish, first, what they would

⁷³ All hard copy data was stored in a locked cabinet at the University. Any electronic media, such as biographies, transcripts were kept on my own personal laptop which was stored in the same locked cabinet which require a password to log on and was only used by me.

⁷⁴ These details concerning informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity were included in the call for research participants that was posted online and also in the local paper, but more details were sent out when participants emailed to express and interest.

be prepared to discuss and, second, to gauge what they thought the project was about. Contributions varied from one line to eight pages. I hoped that these accounts might assist in the development of the final semi-structured interview schedule, allowing me to explore any common or interesting themes. However, although I found these allowed me to vet participants (no-one showed any overtly violent or sexual behaviour, and no-one was rejected on the content of their biography), they were of little use in constructing questions. Although I aimed to explore the commercial and non-commercial relationship and sexual experiences of male clients, I knew that the final data would be heavily determined by what the men actually choose to disclose. I was not sure, before beginning the interviews, if they would be comfortable discussing issues such as their non-commercial lives, sex, or emotions, and if this would restrict data collection. I shall discuss this further below.

Despite my multi-pronged approach to recruitment, the practical challenges of researching hard to reach populations led to people persistently enquiring, about how I would locate the population, how I would successfully recruit and retain participants, and why respondents would even consider taking part in such a study. Despite the increase in knowledge surrounding clients, their relative absence in research added further pressure. Each participant became extremely valuable, not only to my project, but to the broader body of knowledge. I felt that I had been given an opportunity, a window into a world that was mysterious and frequently out of reach. Therefore I felt that if I let one participant slip through the net, I was not only letting myself down, but also the project and the wider academic research community. These issues, coupled with

concern about my lack of first-hand knowledge and experience of the sex industry itself and of actually undertaking research, led me to fear that I was not up to tackling such a challenging project.

Despite these anxieties, who I was proved a key asset during recruitment. My gender motivated some men to take part out, of curiosity and the opportunity to speak about their activities to a woman. My status was also important, as some had a PhD and wanted to help, as they knew how hard it was to get good data and participants. When I posted to recruit participants I used my *student status* and requested *help*, in a bid to make myself seem unthreatening and to appeal to peoples' better side. Yet, my professional status and academic identity was also an asset, and encouraged men to come forward, as they claimed that sound empirical evidence was needed on the subject, in contrast with what was prominent in media and political discourse at the time. Being associated with an academic institution also helped foster trust in the researcher/ participant relationship.

Participants took part in the research for several reasons. First, there was a desire to help. There was also a desire to be heard; taking part in the research was a way of getting their voices out there, as they were not able to speak directly for fear of the stigma of being a client. It was also a forum for men to complain, and set the record straight, about media and political stereotypes that were dominant during the research. Some of the men later described participation as a cathartic process, which helped them understand some of their choices and offered therapeutic benefits. I was aware that some of the men had

never spoken about their involvement before and that the interview might offer therapeutic benefits.

After interviewing began, a snow-ball sample was generated as participants posted on the local message board, encouraging others to participate. In addition, one participant posted the message on a much larger national message board (PunterNet) and a much smaller board. By observing the posts that participants placed on the message boards after interviews, concerning the relaxing and cathartic aspects of taking part in the research and thus encouraging others to participate, I believe my young, female status gave me an unthreatening profile which facilitated further recruitment. The role of a female researcher in facilitating men's disclosures has been highlighted by others (see Broom *et al.*, 2007) and this was confirmed by the participants' posts on the message board.

After my initial post in November 2008, I posted again, in April 2009, encouraging participants to take part with an explicit emphasis on MSN Messenger and telephone interviews, including the option for participants to call me and therefore not having to disclose their phone number (see Appendix 3). This generated a further eleven participants. In total there were just over 40 enquiries about the project and from these, thirty-five participants followed through to be interviewed:

13 came from the local board

17 came from the PunterNet⁷⁵

1 came from a smaller board⁷⁶

4 came from the local paper

- Researcher Safety

Researcher safety is paramount in any research study. However, researching sex work increases awareness of the safety of the researcher, especially if a female researcher is conducting the field work. There are no set guidelines for dealing with gender in the research relationship. I took consistent steps to try to present myself in a particular way in which to reduce my femininity and sexuality; I was apprehensive about becoming the object of unwanted sexual attention which female researchers have experienced in the field. I was aware of the extreme experience faced by Grenz (2005), including the request to masturbate and for sexual services⁷⁷.

The initial filtering process, previously discussed, was utilised in conjunction with careful choice of a face-to-face interview location in a 'public' space on university premises: my supervisor's office, when empty. Further commonsense steps included informing people when and where research was being conducted, and 'signing in and out' with a nominated person at the start

⁷⁵ It is hard to be fully accurate about the numbers from the message boards as some men claimed to have seen it on both message boards so I was never sure which post on which board actually prompted them to take part.

⁷⁶ That the research call had made its way onto another site, other than PunterNet and my original posting site, was only drawn to my attention when I enquired where the participant had heard about the research.

⁷⁷ See Huff (1997) for an account of unwanted attention.

and end of each interview. Furthermore, I limited my personal details that were available to participants to my name, place of work, and a research email address, although *some* self disclosure might have been necessary to gain participants' trust. The only instances where I was asked anything personal, was regarding my age and my motivations for getting involved with the research. As previously described, the research was conducted during a time when paying for sex was the focus of much public negative debate, scrutiny and stigma, and despite these steps, and a thorough ethical review process, negative representations of clients raised a number of concerns amongst my friends and family, as well as within the University. This fear of clients from other people became particularly evident when I was arranging a public space in which to conduct interviews.

A different University department to my own was contacted for office space, in case interviewees did not wish to visit my own sociology building⁷⁸. Although space was offered, stipulations were made about how I should behave and take precautions. Negative constructions of clients were clear, as I was instructed by the department to meet men in the reception area and to escort them out of the building once the interview finished. It was explained to me that staff were 'concerned about men wandering about the building under their own steam' (J. Hockey, 2006, personal correspondence). As these concerns were expressed, and as they multiplied, I found myself absorbing the apprehension of others regarding bringing men into the building, as demonstrated in the following extract from my field diary:

⁷⁸ This alternative office space was not used as all the participants who took part in face-to-face interviews were happy to come to the sociology building.

Staff feel very concerned about men trotting round building on their own – visions of monsters on the loose!! ... Was in bed last night and got that anxious feeling again! What if today's the day I meet that one 'crazy' nutter ... Hopefully not though ... Been really upset by people shouting or stressing at me regarding safety ... [people are] very worried about my safety ... due to the stereotypes. (Research Diary, September 2007)

Others' fears regarding male clients were not limited to the University environment, where people's concerns seemed to revolve around encountering the men. They also seeped into my personal life, where I absorbed them even more deeply. Concerns were raised about exposing too much of my real identity and regarding my physical safety during interviews. People in my personal life asked why I was using my real name, whether it was a good idea to give out my department address, and whether I would be accompanied by someone during interviews. The accumulation of such comments led me to question my methods. I wondered whether I was in fact actually putting myself in danger. Unsurprisingly, by the time I started interviewing, the emotional reactions of other people to the figure of the male client had a significant impact on me and I too became fearful of them and the dangers that they were claimed to represent. I would dread undertaking interviews, apprehensive before hand and fearful of what I was to encounter.

To minimize the risk of experiences of sexual objectification, described above, I down played feminine characteristics, which included tying my hair back,

wearing little makeup and removing jewellery, for all face-to-face interviews. In addition, I had an interview outfit which was unrevealing, formal and was not intended to accentuate any feminine bodily features: black trousers, flat black pumps, a plain high necked top, and a black cardigan. There were, however, no issues of unwanted sexual attention during interviews, and at no point during interviews did I feel uncomfortable about my safety, or feel I was being sexual objectified, or in any danger.

In addition to physical safety, the emotional involvement of the researcher in sensitive research has begun to be discussed⁷⁹ (Campbell, 2002; Lee-Treweek, 2000; Melrose, 2002; Moran-Ellis, 1996; Stanko, 1997). Although, historically, researchers' emotions have been neglected, as emotion emerged as a legitimate topic in the social sciences, an increasing recognition of their importance in field work developed. This partly derives from feminist perspectives that see emotion as informing knowledge production, whereby the researcher's emotional response is a form of data and they themselves are an instrument of the research (Jaggar, 1989). It is now well documented in the literature that research can involve emotional labour in Hochschild's (1983) sense, of self and other emotion management in the paid workplace (see Dickson-Swift *et al.*, 2009; Holland, 2007). Stanko (1997) discusses researching sexual violence and refers to emotions such as fear, anger, sorrow and being close to tears. Sanders (2006b) suggests that significant emotional effort is invested when researching sex work due to the practicalities of actual fieldwork and the strain of constantly attempting to understand, reflect and analyse one's own position.

⁷⁹ See Liamputtong (2007) for a fuller review of the emotionally vulnerable researcher.

Melrose's, study of juvenile entrance into sex work provides a thorough account of the emotional aspects of sex work research. She reveals feelings of distress, shock and anger in parallel with participants' feelings of "guilt, powerlessness and frustration" (Melrose, 2002: 347). She also discusses the unrealistic expectations she placed upon herself to be a good researcher or manage her feelings. O'Connell Davidson discloses feeling of horror and disgust, as well as being 'sickened and disturbed' by misogynistic attitudes she encountered during research with men who pay for sex abroad (O'Connell Davidson and Layder, 1994: 216). Sanders similarly describes feelings of anger and contempt and, infrequently, 'pure rage' in her research among male clients in the UK (2006b: 462). She further discusses the emotional effort of not only having to face sexist attitudes and ignorant practices, but also in response to absorbing and reacting appropriately to participants' difficult emotions (Sanders, 2008a). In contrast, she also describes listening to other stories in which positive emotions were expressed, particularly concerning fun and pleasure. There is recognition that when researching sensitive topics such as sex work emotional difficulties may arise for both researcher and participant. Consequently, methods to support researchers such as debriefing are recommended as strategies for limiting the dangers of emotionally charged research (see Coles and Mudaly, 2009 and Dickson-Swift *et al.*, 2009).

As well as being emotionally draining, valuable data could be lost in the data gathering process, or interviews could even be terminated. Therefore measures were taken to prepare emotionally, including making sure appropriate support networks of supervisors, friends and even the University counselling service

were available. I took time to read other work focusing on violence against women and researchers' experiences of conducting emotionally laborious research, and I kept a research diary. There were also regular debriefing sessions with my supervisor after interviews had taken place. These gave me the opportunity to discuss any issues or anxieties that I was having, especially dealing with the gendered nature of the research and the possibility that I might hear disturbing or traumatic stories. They also allowed my supervisor to check how I was handling this sensitive and demanding research project.

Creating Sexual Stories

Despite success in access and recruitment and negotiating my safety, further difficulties remained. Researching sex can be challenging: its private and taboo nature, coupled with the notion that anything other than monogamous heterosexual relations deviates from norms, means that talking about sex may not be a common occurrence for some (Grenz, 2005). Thus, eliciting people's sexual stories (Plummer, 1995) requires sensitivity and emotional awareness, in order to encourage disclosure during interviews, especially when faced with language barriers, embarrassment, discomfort or strong emotional responses (Campbell, 2002; Meadows, 1997; Robinson *et al.*, 2007). Additionally, sex work research opens up the possibility of the disclosure of sensitive or illegal information, including exploitation, violence, and misogynistic attitudes. Consequently, listening to such narratives may be emotionally draining (Sanders, 2006a).

- Interviewing - practicalities

The interview schedule (see Appendix 7) I drew up was made up of main questions, follow up questions and probes (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). The introduction consisted of basic information regarding age, marital status, number of children, qualifications and employment. There were initially four main sections and a conclusion. From an overarching research focus of exploring the commercial and non-commercial relationship experiences and sexual lives of men who pay for sex, I identified four main areas that I wished to explore empirically: commercial sex involvement, relationships, sex and sexuality, and intimacy. I initially did not think that issues of policy or law would be relevant. However after the first two interviews it became clear that this area was important and this was quickly integrated into the main interview schedule under the heading of the wider sex industry. My five main areas were quite broad in scope, especially as I was initially unsure as to what the men would talk about or disclose. Below is a detailed description of what I was aiming to find out:

- 1.) Industry involvement: when they first started, what was going on at home, how they got involved, their first encounter, how they felt, why they carried on, shifts in opinions of paying for sex. I also asked them about their current commercial sex involvement including where they go, how they feel about their involvement, if they have a routine, changes to the way they take part, memorable experiences, managing fitting it into daily life.

- 2.) Sexual relationships: outside of commercial sex, memorable relationships / partners, changes over time in attitudes or behaviour towards relationships, emotional aspects to relationships. The women in commercial sex: how many visited, memorable women, feelings towards the women, comparisons to non-commercial relationships
- 3.) Sex and sexuality: learning about sex, attitudes to sex when younger, first sexual experiences, changes in attitudes towards sex. Commercial sex: changes, physical aspects, expectations, worries, impact on sexual practices and attitudes.
- 4.) Intimate relationships: commercial and non-commercial; emotions, development, levels and meanings of intimacy; control.
- 5.) The wider sex industry: shifts in the industry, their internet usage, wider attitudes towards the sex industry, engagement with other clients, policy

I developed twelve main questions. Yet as can be seen in the interview schedule (Appendix 8), I also had a list of many prompt style questions. It is important to note that during interviews I did not fire off all the prompt questions, but simply kept them to hand, perhaps to appease my own anxieties. I was concerned that participants would not be able to discuss certain topics and so in a bid to encourage rich data collection, I developed a list of questions and prompts that I could utilise if the conversation stalled. I was fearful about 'wasting' participants and obtaining inadequate, empty data. However, I found that whilst, initially, for some men the interview appeared slightly strained, the majority of participants spoke freely and in fact some did not stop speaking to the point that, after transcription, I found several narratives with whole pages of

text in which participants had spoken and I had not interrupted or probed. This is not to say that there were not difficulties during interviews, such as my own nervousness or my inability to direct the interview in the way I wanted at times, merely that many interviewees were anything but reticent.

As more interviews were conducted, the interview schedule altered to adapt to what participants would talk about, what they could answer and to include extra information that consistently came up in interviews that warranted further explicit inquiry, such as the role of the internet in generating and maintaining relationships amongst clients. There were, therefore, differences between the first interview schedule I used and the last interview schedule I used. However, the first three participants I interviewed face- to-face agreed to return to the University to take part in a second face-to-face interview, and so the data collected was similar to the later interviews. Furthermore, most of the first fifteen participants interviewed agreed to a second interview either by phone or face-to-face. Second interviews were introduced for two main reasons. First, to gain clarification of any points participants mentioned that I was unsure about or were minimal and required further probing to become clear. Secondly, to offer the possibility to ask questions that developed during subsequent interviews. The aim of second interviews was to obtain consistent data across all participants, as I became more comfortable with what participants could and would answer. Consequently, as key themes developed across the first interviews, second interviews allowed these to be returned to and explored in greater detail.

- Transformations of time and space

Qualitative research methods and indeed traditional forms of communication and interaction have historically been bound by time, geographic location and language, amongst other constraints. With the development of technology such as the phone, email and the internet, these traditional barriers have been broken down; developments which have also influenced the practices of those involved in sexual commerce as Chapter 2 explained. Taking note of these shifts, interviews with thirty-five participants were conducted: ten were face-to-face, eighteen were via the telephone, and seven were using MSN Messenger. A flexible approach was necessary due to the stigmatised topic and the general need for participants to keep the time taken for attending interviews hidden from others. In addition, due to the geographic reach of the online recruitment process some participants were not local. However, institutional and financial constraints meant that they were too far away to travel for a face to face interview themselves and as already discussed I was unable to visit them. Consequently, both recruitment and interviewing required me to participate in the ways in which some of the men were living out and managing an aspect of their identity which was potentially secret or indeed stigmatised.

From undertaking my project it became clear that online interviews have an 'out of time' quality, not constrained by place. For example, undertaking traditional face to face interviews was constrained by University building opening hours as well as the ability of both myself and participants to be in this same place at the same mutually convenient time. Thus, when conducting

online interviews on occasions I found myself interviewing late at night sitting in my pyjamas, at weekends, or early in the morning. This type of interviewing renegotiates the boundaries of traditional professional direct contact; my 9 to 5 time block for 'work' became blurred with participants after 5 time block for leisure / outside of work activities. Thus online interviewing manipulates conventional temporal boundaries and extends time in terms of what one can achieve; the 9-5 was not the only 'time' for me to do work. Similarly, for heterosexual men there is often a dominant model of time: i.e. time for work, family time, leisure time and then sex time. However, many of my participants were living on the margins of time, instead of sex happening first thing in the morning or last thing at night, as is thought to be common, sex was instead integrated into their working day, after work on the way home, whilst working away or whilst their wives were working. These elements were present when online interviews took place, for example I could only speak to some men when they were working away and another participant who lived with his parents had to negotiate the time of online interview around his parents. Conducting online interviews, which renegotiated the boundaries of time, further highlighted how the men in my sample were used to living on the margins of time.

Despite the relative 'novelty' of this approach there are now numerous studies that have considered online methods⁸⁰. Whilst it is acknowledged there are significant benefits of conducting face-to-face interviews, using different forms of communication offer other advantages (Opdenakker, 2006; Shuy, 2005). The following discussion explores those benefits and constraints within the context

⁸⁰ See Mann and Stewart (2000) or Jones (1999) for thorough reviews on doing internet research.

of online methods⁸¹, emphasising the impact this renegotiation of spatial and temporal dimensions has on interviewing. By using online interviews, time was saved as there was no need for transcription, no time spent travelling to interviews and the data was instantly saved and archived also resulting in reduced costs (Seymour, 2009; Wood and Griffiths, 2007). In addition, for this project ethical constraints dictated how and where interviews could be conducted, that is, they were conducted on university premises' and thus during working hours. However, the ability of the virtual realm to cut across time and space barriers which meant that communication was no longer geographically or temporally bound, reduced the negative impact of these ethical constraints. Thus, it was more straightforward to find a 'time and place' that was mutually convenient for myself and participants. The geographical range of participants was also extended and I was aware that I was communicating with participants who were not local (see Hinchilcliffe and Gavin, 2009). In fact one man emailed me to express an interest in the project when he was working off the Brazilian coast! Thus online interviewing extends what can be done in relation to time and increases the distance across which participants and the researcher can communicate at a reduced cost.

It has been well documented that online methods increase access hard to reach populations. The increase in perceived anonymity may enhance participation from stigmatised populations or those who may be unwilling or dislike

⁸¹ It is important to recognise that many aspects of the following discussion can also be applied to phone interviews but become more pronounced in a virtual context. For an overview of using telephone interviews see; Carr and Worth (2001); Holt (2010); Miller (1995); Stephens (2007). However, I have chosen to focus on online methods due to their relatively 'new' uptake in social research and due to the role of the internet in sexual commerce.

traditional interview styles (Graffigna *et al.*, 2006; Hinchcliffe and Gavin, 2009; Matthews and Cramer, 2008). Meho (2005) claims that the anonymity offered by online communication may encourage participants to discuss sensitive issues more easily. I believe this anonymity enabled some participants to be included who would otherwise have declined due to the secretive and stigmatised nature of their activities, as was seen, when after my second call for participants, several men agreed to be interviewed by MSN⁸². This is corroborated by the following comment on a message board: 'I did email Natalie to take part but lost my nerve. I got a reply today asking if I still want to take part and that I could talk via MSN if I feel better with that. I have replied saying I would prefer MSN and await her reply'⁸³. Thus the distance between myself and participants generated from utilising online methods was an asset. In conjunction, anonymity is thought to enhance disclosure and encourage disinhibition, enhancing validity (Joinson, 200; Hinchcliffe and Gavin, 2009; Wood and Griffiths, 2007). Furthermore, Garcia *et al.* (2009) argue that ecological validity and the applicability of the research setting to participant's natural settings increases when interviewing those who are already engaging in online communities. Consequently for this project, using a commercial sex website as a recruitment venue itself was beneficial. There are certain rules on the message boards and participants may hold some sort of status on the sites, as Chapter 2 documented. I believe this internet etiquette was also present in

⁸² It is hard to be certain exactly how many men agreed to be interviewed from each 'wave' of recruitment as I both posted a second message and emailed men again who had expressed an interest but had not got back to me: whether this was due to nerves or just being busy I am unsure of. I would say approximately 20 participants came from the first message that I posted- even if their interview did take place after I had posted the second message.

⁸³ I have not given the website this came from nor the pseudonym of the participant to protect confidentiality and anonymity.

the interviews, with participants not wishing to damage their reputations by being overtly offensive⁸⁴.

Despite the allure that online methods seem to offer there are also disadvantages. Duffy (2002), amongst others, has raised questions regarding sampling. Samples derived in this way are thought to be unrepresentative and exclude those without online access or skills (Illingworth, 2001; Steiger and Goritz, 2006). They tend to be self selecting, as is the case for many studies, but limited to those who are already online (Nicholas *et al.*, 2010). This means that the sample cuts across geographical and socio-economic divisions which a researcher might want to have represented, as well as excluding those without financial access to computing equipment and skills or the comfort to use those skills. My sample were all self -electing and the majority of participants, regardless of how they were interviewed, used the online message boards in some way; from searching for recommendations to interacting with the online sex work community. It is important that online researchers remain aware of the self-selecting nature of their samples and recognise the limitations to empirical and possibly theoretical generalisability.

In the context of my study, the reader must be aware that these findings are from a sample of men who pay for sex at a certain time period and so offer an *insight* into paying for sex, *not* a broadly generalisable account of paid-for sex.

⁸⁴ See Sanders (2008a) for a detailed account of internet etiquette on sex work message boards. However, whilst I have no explicit data concerning internet etiquette and the interview, I draw these conclusions from my experience and instinct. Participants knew I was reading the message boards and so if they did behave in an inappropriate manner I could have posted a message about them on the board, equally this applied to my own behaviour and the participants could have posted about my behaviour if I was inappropriate. (Neither of these occurrences occurred.)

Excluding potential participants also presents issues of incorrect inclusion. Concerns have been raised that given the anonymity offered by online methods and the distance between researcher and participant, how can researchers be sure that interviewees are who they say they are and that they are answering 'truthfully'? Again this raises concerns about validity (Dholakia and Zhang, 2004; Wood and Griffiths, 2007).

It is well documented that non-face to face contact can result in a loss of paraverbal cues (Hinchclife and Gavin, 2009; Schneider *et al.*, 2002; Seymour, 2001). The physical, emotional and visual aspects of face to face interaction are missing from text-based interaction due to a lack of physical proximity. During my interviews I would frequently fire off questions or responses to what participants had just said whilst they were thinking, and comments such as 'slow down mate' were made (see Illingworth, 2006). In addition, personal characteristics that may assist the researcher are concealed (Garcia *et al.*, 2009). Text based interaction differs from oral communication as time may be taken to think about and alter responses, so the lack of spontaneity can impact on validity (Dholakia and Zhang, 2004; Wood and Griffiths, 2007). As well as participants needing to be comfortable enough with technology, as suggested above, the researcher needs to be experienced in online communication to be able to respond appropriately, for example sensing hostility or emotional upset despite distance and time lapses (Ayling and Mewse, 2009).

The temporal and spatial dimensions cited above also present further challenges. Ayling and Mewse (2009) draw attention to the fact the researcher

has no control over the conditions in which participants are undertaking research. Thus the researcher must be aware that there may be delays whilst participants do other things. It was apparent during several online interviews that participants engaged in other activities. One man made cups of tea and another was chatting to others online at the same time. Online interviewing can be time consuming and may require many conversations; so it is essential that researchers prepare participants for this, as well as working hard to maintain interest and participation. I found that when I was honest with a potential participant and explained that an online interview may take up to four hours over several conversations, he told me that was ridiculous and he would not be taking part! With the use of technology come new types of 'problems', therefore. Technical difficulties associated with the 'space' one is operating in, such as with, software, hardware or internet connections, may also present themselves. On some occasions I found that when interviewing with a mobile broadband connection at home, it was unreliable; leaving me (and possibly my participants) frustrated and stressed. In addition using online methods presents new challenges in terms of safe spaces; storing online conversations with their sensitive contents and participants email addresses embedded must be addressed by researchers (Beddows, 2008; Duffy, 2002; Wood and Griffiths, 2007). I had to be sure that as soon as possible after the interview I was able to remove email addresses. However, I believe these disadvantages were outweighed by the further reach offered to the project of both geographical distance and size of the sample and the anonymity afforded that enabled participants to discuss their involvement. Actively participating in the methods

used by some men to undertake and manage their paid-for sexual lives was a particularly valuable research experience.

The method and data when collected thus have a parallel quality, evident in the similarities between online interviews and engagement in sexual commerce I have noted. In both contexts men had to find time in the day to take part, find a private space and time, have access to technical facilities and be able to cover their tracks. For example, one man only ever paid for sex when he was working away and our multiple conversations online (we spoke four times) that formed his interview could only be arranged when he was working away. The men I interviewed were thus, to varying degrees, skilled in managing different identities across time; whilst they would always be a father, a husband or an employee, they were also a man who pays for sex. However, men had frequently developed strategies to stop these identities colliding outside of commercial sex. That said, in the virtual realm, perhaps due to the anonymity it provided, the men were in both a space and time where they simultaneously inhabited all of these identities. This notion of multiple identities, and the role of time in power relations, as well as shifting sexual life, is something I discuss in detail in the coming chapters.

- Interviewing men

Feminist researchers have frequently reflected on the social location of the researcher especially in terms of gender, when women interview women (Oakley, 1981). Arendell (1997) argues that, despite an increase in studies on gender, work on men conducted by women has received little discussion in

terms of the impact of the researcher's gender⁸⁵. My participants varied widely in terms of age and social class (indicated by educational achievement and current employment). Consequently, the power dynamics differed in every interview. Generally the younger participants appeared more nervous and less able to talk freely during the interview, which meant that I had to control the interview much more and coax the information out⁸⁶. Sanders (2008a) reports similar experiences and conclusions. In contrast, many of the older participants talked freely and even encouraged questions, with comments such as 'go on then, ask me another'. One participant actually stated that he would not have been able to take part in the research if he was younger, as he has now, 'Become more comfortable with myself. I've probably sorted out my philosophy of life more than when I was younger and I recognise that I don't think that I'm doing anybody any harm' (Jack, 56, married).

One of the younger participants (aged 31) was initially wary about sending information over the internet and sent a significant amount via post, including details of brothels in the local area, both currently open and shut down, local policing policies, a hand written spread sheet detailing each encounter, and ten pages of photocopied handwritten notes about the women he had visited. After the interview, at a first glance I felt the information was limited and the interview was quite short. He was not forthcoming with his answers and needed lots of encouragement on my part. Subsequently, he emailed me, apologising and saying that he did not feel he had been as candid as he could have been and

⁸⁵ This has begun to be addressed for example, see Pini (2005) and Gurney (1985)

⁸⁶ I came to this conclusion by interpreting behaviours such as, short answers, stumbling, repetition, 'erms', lack of depth and willingness to divulge information, as nerves.

then sent me more post, consisting of thirty-seven pages of handwritten detailed notes describing the best or worst sex he had had with the women we had been chatting about, changes to the industry, media influence, the women he loved, funny experiences and a list of unfulfilled fantasies with the negative aspects to consider. None of this material was photocopied.

Whilst there was no explicit sexualisation of myself two participants did comment on the fact that I could become involved in sex work: if I ever ran out of money, or to allow me to have a greater understanding of the topic.

However, whilst I was not the object of sexual interest, attempts were made to include my sexuality in the research: one participant stated he liked to visit women 'who were dressed like you and who did not look like a prostitute'.

Another man brought my sexuality in by asking if I would 'object to my man jumping in the shower with me to scrub my back'. However, at no time did I feel threatened or uncomfortable with the participants and I did not experience any extreme issues. Perhaps my formal and official request for participants reduced this possibility. The extensive information sheet was precise in describing what was and was not acceptable, and the boundaries of confidentiality. There was at times friendly chat after interviews when I logged on to MSN Messenger, and one participant put kisses on the end of an electronic correspondence – however I do not feel that this was a deliberate sexualisation of the researcher / researched relationship; instead it was simply a way of ending an informal exchange which is common in electronic communication.

Finally, as well as my own impression management in order to draw out data, there is the possibility that the men themselves were taking part in their own impression management. My position as a young, female, professional student, working in an academic area, has encouraged me to question whether the men are telling the truth and how much of the data were idealised views, intertwined with reality, fantasy, and half truths. This could have been because the men did not want to offend me, or did not want to accept their own oppressive practices, and thirdly, or simply had faulty memories. The men were very keen to distance themselves from the more exploitative end of the industry, especially relating to street prostitution, trafficking and drugs, and presented a mostly positive view of their involvement. However, I did take steps to ensure 'truthful' accounts as explained above. They often emphasised the importance of mutual pleasure and respect for sex workers. This raises issues concerning my gender: if they had been talking to a male researcher, would they have put as much importance on stressing these points? This is impossible to know but one participant did draw attention to this issue which raised this question in my own mind: 'I think my major concern to be honest is trying to, erm, perhaps, being aware of your sensitivity, because you know I sort of, erm, I wouldn't normally talk to a lady the way I've been talking to you' (Mark, 48, married).

- Parallels between research and commercial sex relationships

It is suggested by Sanders (2008a) that, due to the nature of the research interview, it possesses many of the qualities of a commercial sex encounter. For example, I was a young(er) female, we were discussing men's secret

involvement in commercial sex, and the interviews were arranged in some ways similar to a commercial sex encounter. Both the female researcher and sex worker undertake a significant amount of impression management to ensure the desired result; for me that was getting men to talk about their experiences openly and encouraging others to participate by posting on internet message boards. For the sex worker the encounter entails client sexual satisfaction, return custom and possibly a positive comment on an internet site. It is documented in the literature (Lever and Dolnick, 2002; Sanders, 2005a) that sex workers may have a therapeutic and listening role, especially regarding men's negative experiences of relationships. This is similar to the tales told during my research. Furthermore, consistently not challenging oppressive or misogynistic views, to ensure a satisfactory encounter on behalf of the client, is present in both roles, thus both sex worker and researcher engage in significant emotional labour⁸⁷.

At times I experienced sadness upon hearing stories from interviewees. They told stories of being bullied and laughed at for being a virgin; wanting, but not being able, to get a girlfriend, and of the ways in which commercial sex highlights and reinforces men's inadequacies and loneliness. I have been told tales of devastation over marriages that are devoid of emotion and physical contact. One man said that he wanted his 'soul mate back', cried and went on to ask if he needed therapy. There were further moments of extreme sadness,

⁸⁷ There are many difference however that must be acknowledged including, there was no sexual activity taking place (which I would suggest significantly alters the dynamic of the interaction), there was no economic exchange and the encounter had been set up as a formal academic enquiry – not for the purpose of leisure or entertainment.

especially with the widowed men. Dave (56, widow-dating) discussed how his wife had died of breast cancer and whilst I was reading the interview transcript, his account of family life during this time and after her death reduced me to tears. Alan (57, widow-dating) discussed the loss of his wife, just as they were about to start on a new stage in their lives together as their children had left home. His description of events, coupled with the statement: 'She then went and died on me', particularly saddened me. Not long after interviewing began my grandfather passed away, so I was in a heightened emotional state whilst dealing with my own personal grief and was therefore possibly more sensitive to these stories of grief and loss. In response to the men's emotional accounts of their unhappiness and sadness I experienced my own feelings of sadness and sympathy. These poignant stories challenged views of clients as dangerous, and instead implied human vulnerability.

However, alongside my feelings of sympathy towards the men, I also experienced feelings of anger. It was difficult at times to listen to stories from married men, about their involvement in commercial sex, whilst they simultaneously claimed that their wives were their 'best friend', that they loved them, and that they 'would not want to hurt' them. In addition, the stories of how men felt they were so close to sex workers, but still claimed to have a good relationship with their wife, apart from the lack of sex, were at times emotionally testing. What I saw as the deceit and false foundations that their relationships were built on, as secretive double lives, challenged my own opinions on relationships. The men did not explicitly blame their wives for their involvement in commercial sex, but they did use their wife's behaviour to

justify their own. Due to my nervousness, despite the fact that I was experiencing these emotions, I felt a degree of numbness whilst interviewing and it seemed that my emotions were suppressed by anxieties about generating data. However, upon ceasing the interviews, and after reflecting on my findings, I began to recognise the intense emotions I experienced. These will be returned to later.

Further parallels between the researcher and sex worker were present due to the nature of the encounter. The interview, like the commercial sex encounter, was both limited and bounded. My interaction with participants was limited to one-off events⁸⁸, with time (and place) agreed beforehand. When arranging the interviews it was made clear by some participants that this was similar to the way commercial sex meetings were arranged, such as whilst working away, on the way home from work, or leaving work early. Through being clear about the boundaries of confidentiality I defined what was acceptable information that could be revealed, similar to how sex workers' stipulate what services are available. Furthermore, the things said during interviews had, for some men, never been revealed before outside of commercial sex, thus both myself and my research were located outside of their non-commercial lives, similar to their commercial sex experiences. The tone of some interviews and the emphasis on reciprocity and mutual pleasure parallels commercial sex. During their paid-for encounters mutual pleasure was frequently a key component of a satisfactory encounter and affirmed men's masculine identity; similarly, during interviews this idea of mutual pleasure and confirmation of men's identities as good lovers

⁸⁸ Some MSN Messenger interviews took place over more than one 'conversation' and second interviews did take place, some by email however.

and good men was emphasised. The promotion of the research by participants resulted in quasi-field reports being posted about both myself and the research:

I did my telephone interview with Natalie today (lasted about 45 minutes). I was quite surprised at some of the emphasis in the questioning as it seemed to me to stray outside what I would have expected from sociologists ... She seemed to be particularly interested in the punter's subjective experience in his sexual encounters, both commercial and non-commercial, and whether the former differed in particular ways from the latter ... I do urge any of you lazy buggers who still haven't got round to it to give her a hand, though, as I'm sure her work can do nothing but good. One thing she did mention was that my written submission was much longer than most of the stuff she's received, and I don't think I gave her more than the equivalent of three sheets of A4. Make an effort, chaps!

As sex workers are judged on their professional ability, I was on mine. My ability to actually conduct the research, ask questions and put participants at ease was commented on, as were issues of trust and genuine identity, which parallel sex workers ability to help men relax, earn their trust and establish their credibility as genuine sex workers. 'Recommendations', such as the one above that described my demeanour, resulted in more men taking part, as Mark (48, married) told me:

Well I saw the request ... erm, and I think I had a desire to do my bit to encourage the truth ... when I look at [message board] ... some of the

guys that've been involved that you've interviewed ... quite a few have passed comment afterwards about what a lovely lady you were and things like that and that you didn't bite and all sorts of stuff like that and have been encouraging others ... one of the topics has been ... "please guys go and see Natalie to go and put the record straight to say it as it is, not as it's being portrayed in the media".

However, these parallels, despite the research benefits, highlight the fact that participants may also have seen the interview as a surrogate commercial sex encounter, which may have impacted on how they perceived me and the encounter and therefore how they told their stories. Consequently, this may influence the data and findings and the knowledge that is produced, but unfortunately I have no evidence to either confirm or deny this.

Introducing the Men

The sample was made up of thirty-five participants: nineteen were currently married; six had been married, yet had lost their wives due to divorce or death and ten were single. The average age was 50, with ages ranging between 29 and 69. Most participants were older, hence the higher average age⁸⁹. Educational achievement varied from no qualifications to having PhDs, and employment similarly ranged from being unemployed to holding prestigious jobs. 22 of the men had children, yet none of these were the single men⁹⁰. The table below shows the spread of where men went for their first time and where they now go,

⁸⁹ Twenty-eight men were aged 40 and over.

⁹⁰ See Appendix 9 for a detailed summary of each participant.

as can be seen the majority of participants now, mostly direct their activities towards independent and agency women⁹¹ who advertise on the internet.

Table 1. Locations visited

<i>Location</i>	<i>First time</i>	<i>Now</i>
<i>Independents</i>	15	23
<i>Parlour / brothel</i>	11	8
<i>Flat</i>	5	2
<i>Street</i>	4	0
<i>N/A</i>	.	2

Some of the men knew precisely how many women they had seen, when and where. Others had no idea. The frequency of their visits varied and, as some men had been involved for a long time, their patterns had changed. Some men were going once a week and some only a few times a year – there was no set patterns. Only one man alluded to the fact that he still might visit street sex workers, however I am unsure about this. As table 2 shows below, there is again difference across the men, some men had been involved for a number of years and others for only a few month, with the age of first involvement again being varied.

Table 2. Length of involvement and age first started

	<i>Lowest</i>	<i>Highest</i>
<i>Age first time</i>	17 Years	66 Years
<i>Length of involvement</i>	1 month	30 years

⁹¹ This refers to the most *common* location the men visit now, in some cases it was hard to distinguish the difference between independent women and those working through an agency due to the fact that a lot of men used the internet and used the term 'independent' to cover any women who were advertising on the web. Thus I have grouped together independents and agency women and parlours and brothels.

Leaving the Field and Distance

Similar to Woodthorpe (2007), despite having undertaken qualitative research training nothing prepared me for the reality of being in the field. There were moments of sheer elation, such as when a potential participant agreed to take part and I could add him to 'the list', or shared humour with participants as I listened and related to their stories. Consequently, once the interviews were completed, I felt particularly relieved. However, this was only one phase in the generation of sexual stories. In order for the narratives to be analysed, each interview was transcribed. This was not a linear process and interviews were conducted in parallel with previous interviews being transcribed.

Poland (1995) argues that transcripts are merely written records and partial accounts of a much richer interactional experience, with transcription itself being an interpretive process. Transcribing the audio recordings of interviews allows data to be presented in a textual format for subsequent analysis and is a common and often taken-for-granted procedure in qualitative research.

However, although the textual products are frequently given privileged status as a representation of the interview (Poland, 1995) the process is mundane and laborious for researchers. Yet the importance of transcription should not be disregarded, as the researcher engages with the data collected, listening to the participants' voices again, but with some distance, allowing for analytic interpretation to take place without being preoccupied by directing the interview or obtaining good enough data. All face-to-face and phone interviews were transcribed by me in the order that they were conducted. There were

problems with the quality of the recording with two interviews, due to poor reception on the mobile phone. MSN Messenger interviews were already, effectively, transcribed, but they were formatted to resemble the verbal interviews and all email addresses were removed. It was originally intended that each interview would be transcribed before the next interview, but as several interviews were sometimes done in one day this was not always possible.

The transferring of data from an audio to a textual form involves the researcher's interpretation, hence the result may not be a verbatim account of the interview. Thus reflexive practice is needed. The researcher makes many decisions whilst transcribing about what to include or not. Rubin and Rubin (2005), for example suggest only including the level of detail relevant to the analysis, with any information which may influence interpretation. One can include interruptions and pauses, yet even the audio recording cannot capture the unheard context and the textual document produced is unable to convey the non verbal communication, interpersonal interaction and emotional context, and this must be considered during analysis (Poland, 1995.) Following Lapadat and Lindsay (1999) a notebook was kept and any important or interesting descriptive or analytical thoughts were recorded.

Faced with around thirty-five hours of recorded interviews, seven MSN Messenger interviews, one handwritten interview (because the participant did not wish to be recorded), and significant email communications for second interviews, it quickly became apparent that I would not be able to record every

change in tone or significant in-depth detail. Drawing on Rubin and Rubin (2005), the interviews were transcribed with only the level of detail concerning paralinguistic behaviours that I thought appropriate and useful: interruptions, pauses, occurrences of laughter or tears, and stalling words were included. The length of the pauses was not detailed nor was any tone, non-verbal actions or emotional expressions⁹². Once transcribed, most participants were sent the transcript to check (this was a proviso included for ethical reasons and in an attempt to give participants' power and encourage them to take part in the sensitive research). Whilst this is often seen as having a negative impact in which what was said can be replaced by what was meant to be said (Poland, 1995), in my case this produced very few alterations. Most changes were due to inaccurate hearing of words. One participant chose to remove details of a present relationship, and one man added additional insights to what he had said during the interview. Consequently, while the transcripts produced might not be a 'true' or fully comprehensive reflection of the actual interview, they do offer a double interpretation of the interaction, with input from both myself and the participants. Once transcribed and checked, all interviews were printed off and stored, with both first and second interviews filed together with the initial biography, so I was able to build up a portfolio of data for each participant.

- Analysis

Analysis did not start once all the interviews had been conducted and transcribed; instead, from the moment communication was made via email I

⁹² Notes were made after each interview (where possible) that described participants appearance, personality and behaviours such as fidgeting or stammering which was interpreted as nervousness.

sought to be analytical in my thought processes. As previously mentioned, there was a large amount of data⁹³. Each participant took part in a full first interview with thirty participants taking part in some sort of second interview or contact. Three returned for face-to-face interviews, eight took part in subsequent phone interviews, eighteen in follow-up email contact and one in a follow-up MSN Messenger exchange. Consequently, I went from being initially concerned about having too little data to being overwhelmed by the volume of rich material that I had in front of me. I found this problematic, and so I started out coding each line of transcription so as not to lose valuable insight or context of the data. However, whilst this was helpful in allowing me to get to know my data in-depth, it did not provide analytic insights and instead created a confusing range of in-depth descriptive comments.

Accordingly, I quickly moved on to trying to summarise these descriptive points by drawing up a short summary of each interview which aimed to describe what had been said in a brief, one-page format. Again I struggled with this and found being so minimalist difficult, yet this allowed the analysis to move on and during this process I developed five top-level descriptive themes. These were: the commercial sex industry, heterosexual relationships, policy and law, masculinities, and sexuality. I put each interview and second interview together into NVIVO and coded them under these themes. As I went along,

⁹³ It was assumed that the biographies would give some insight and be useful as data. Whilst they were useful for the initial recruitment phase as a filtering process, similar to their lack of input for constructing interview schedules, they offered no benefit during analysis for this project (this is not to say that they will not be useful for later work). In fact I chose to exclude them from analysis for this project due to the large amounts of data gathered in the interview phase and the very varied nature of the information in the biographies themselves which made comparison difficult.

some themes grew and others shrunk. Whilst this was essential for me to see what the data were describing, and what was being discussed, it was still not particularly analytic. However, from this organisation of the data, several things became apparent. I realised that there was a lot of talk about movement into being a man who pays for sex, the changing and dynamic nature of commercial and non-commercial relationships, and control of the self or the encounter, especially with the use of money and time as constraints or the women having control. From this, three analytical themes were produced; (shifting) identities, (transition of) relationships and (mobility of) power. The data that were organised then reread within this analytic framework. Since I knew the data extremely well at this point organising it into this analytic framework was relatively straightforward (see Appendix 10 for the final themes that were used). The data were literally cut up, organised on a table into smaller themes within each top-level theme and then stuck into three separate notebooks – one for each analytic theme.

- Emotions as data

Transcription and analysis were not detached processes, In fact, as shown previously, my role as the researcher influenced these processes as much as they did the actual interview conduct, and these processes further enlightened me about my further role in shaping the construction of participant's accounts. When the transcripts were completed, and the voices turned to text and read in conjunction with my research diary and reflective interview notes, I finally started to make connections between my emotions and the data collection

process and recognise my own anxiety. These links became apparent because, despite having over 44 hours of face-to-face or telephone typed transcripts, seven internet chat transcripts and many other email second interviews, I was still extremely anxious that I did not have 'good' enough data. I felt that I was unable to see anything within it. My recognition of these feelings of anxiety sparked a realisation that they were in fact not new, but that I had been experiencing them throughout the whole recruitment and data collection process. I then began to recognise that my preoccupation with meeting academic standards, obtaining enough of these 'hard to reach' participants, and not letting the wider sex work research academic community down, had impacted upon the way interviews were conducted. My anxieties and nervousness may have muted participants; for example, in an attempt not to miss what I perceived to be key questions and to get the right data, pauses were met by me launching into the next question. Had I not had such high expectations of myself, I might have been a little less nervous during some of the interviews and I might have felt able to let participants fill some of the silences, instead of feeling that I had to.

Hubbard *et al.* (2001) similarly describe how the researcher's emotions influence the data collected. They reveal how, after one particularly emotional interview, the researcher conducted subsequent interviews differently. In an attempt to manage her emotions she deliberately failed to establish rapport with participants so they would not open up too much about their experiences; she managed her emotions by stifling the opportunity for participants to disclose emotionally-fraught events, and when given hints to push participants, as on

occasions I was, she failed to probe further. They infer from this that the data collected is therefore different to what could have been produced if rapport had been established, but they stress that this does not make the data any less valid, it just produced different data than would otherwise have emerged. The reflection I engaged in after I had left the field provided me with the distance I needed to recognise that my emotional experience of anxiety about 'wasting' participants and getting good data had had such a profound impact on the data collection process as described. This allowed me to appreciate that similar to Hubbard *et al.*, had I been less nervous, different data could have emerged⁹⁴.

I was surrounded by supportive people throughout the project, although there was a lack of understanding or knowledge surrounding my work and frequently, stereotypical assumptions of commercial sex were held by those around me, especially in my personal life. Similar to Braun (1999), I consequently found myself, on some occasions, being exceptionally vague about my PhD. I sometimes claimed that it just focused on 'gender'. In cases in which people were unaware that I was doing a PhD, I simply stated that I was at university studying sociology and did not correct their assumption that I was an undergraduate, as a strategy to forestall questions about the content of my research. My own fears about my safety suggest that despite my attempts to assume a non-judgemental attitude and my increased knowledge about my participants, I too was still drawing on dominant stereotypes by sensing that I

⁹⁴ This is a contentious point and I am aware that there is no way of knowing if, or how, the data collected would have been different. However, due to what I perceive to be the success of the project and the fact that 'good' data was collected I am assuming the position that had I been less nervous then the data would have been different but not necessarily any better.

could in some way be in danger, thus reinforcing the spoiled identities of the men.

In some ways the fears I felt during the research were, in part, a result of the fact that I internalised the fears and the personal reactions of people around me. Therefore I 'experienced' the effects of the dominant stereotype. This experience allowed me to 'feel' the stigma and danger that men take on when they start paying for sex. The men's own emotional articulation of these difficulties, together with my own experience of having to manage my identity as a sex work researcher, allowed me to empathise and understand how this troubled them. My powerful experience of feeling this stigma, in conjunction with participants' disclosure of difficulties associated with being a male client, such as the conflict with other identities that the men had in their work and personal lives, allowed me to see the significance and complexities of inhabiting a male client identity. The centrality of my own conflicts with regards to my identity in my personal and professional life, in terms of how I reassessed or managed it, led to identity becoming a key conceptual tool in my thesis. Thus recognising and engaging with our emotions as researchers can be key for understanding the ways in which we interpret our data and arrive at our theoretical frameworks.

Although I experienced significant emotional responses throughout the project, just reporting on my emotional experiences could be criticised as too self indulgent or 'intellectually sloppy' (Letherby, 2000). However, as I have shown, reflecting on our emotions gives us a different level of understanding of

our research (Harris and Huntington, 2001). I have documented how I experienced a number of emotions throughout the research process as a result of interactions with both people around me and with research participants. As such, I have laid out how my emotional experiences, once recognised, allowed me to approach the men in my sample in an empathetic manner which provided insight into the context of what the men are doing.

Conclusion

This chapter has detailed the epistemological framework and methodological choices of the research project. I have drawn attention to feminist principles which emphasis experience and reflexivity. Recruitment processes, online interviewing and the resulting sample have been discussed, with a reflexive account of the research process interweaved, emphasising researcher role and thus increasing the transparency of the research process. The chapter allows the reader to see how the data has been collected and analysed, thus setting the stage for the subsequent analysis chapters in which Chapter 5 focuses on identity, Chapter 6 on transitions, relationships and heterosexuality, and Chapter 7 on the fluidity of power.

Chapter 5 – Identity

This chapter opens up the analysis of paying for sex through the lens of being a heterosexual man. As will be highlighted later, men can inhabit multiple identities which they can move within and between. This chapter is to show how the men in my sample come to understand performing a particular identity, in the context of either before their involvement in commercial sex, or being a client. Starting from Mead's (1934) notion of the reflexive self, this chapter opens by arguing, on the basis of my data, that it is not until these men are aware - reflect- that they recognise *something* that is different from their perceptions of normative heterosexual masculinity, that their journey into commercial sex and thus the identity of a client begins. Moreover, the men construct their identities both in and out of commercial sex in terms of similarity and difference to other men, and thus in relation to masculine standards of heterosexuality. However, the boundaries between commercial and non-commercial selves are not always clearly defined and despite management strategies, the multiple identities present in commercial and non commercial worlds leak into one and other and thus the boundaries of identification become blurred.

'I'm not a man's man'⁹⁵: reflexivity and difference

'I sort of looked at my life and thought "I've been a boring person for most of it, I want to try and get some excitement back into it"' (Edwin, 54, married).

⁹⁵ Edwin, 54, married

The process of becoming a man who pays for sex can begin some time before the actual encounter takes place. My data suggests that for some men, even though they construct themselves in relation to others or what society expects, confirming that identity is interactional and constructed in relation to others (see Jenkins, 2008), it is not until there is some sort of an embodied recognition of this, coming from *within*, that it becomes apparent. For some clients the decision to pay for sex begins with processes of *internal* identification of a *something* which they feel challenges their own accomplishment of normative masculinity.

Mead's (1934), reflexive "I" and "me", how "I" come to understand myself through perceiving how "I" am viewed by others as "me" can be seen at work in an initial reflexive process amongst some men in my sample. As Ryan (48, long term partner) simply stated: 'I felt I was missing out on something.' Reflection upon being someone in a certain context can be seen in John's (40, married) narrative regarding his employment, where he revealed an 'ongoing feeling of frustration ... I seemed to be in work ... pretty dull, pretty risk free, pretty unfulfilling.' His employment was not matching his perceived masculine criteria of excitement and fulfilment. These reflexive insights were not necessarily instantaneous. Oliver (63, married) suggested that: 'it sort of crept up over a while; my feeling that I was inadequate [sexually] was creeping up over perhaps a period of 18 months and getting more intense.' This reflexive experience of being a certain person alerted these men to the fact that *something* was missing, lacking or simply not how the men wanted or thought it could be. The internal recognition of the discrepancy between what men were and what

they wanted to be, was explicitly acknowledged in some cases. As Ryan (48, long term partner) stated: 'Who knows what's buried somewhere at the back of my head which has actually triggered this in me, that I would go to those kind of places so many times.'

However, as argued by Mead (1934), and explained in Chapter 3, this internal reflection does not occur within an isolated individual. The self, as developed from the self consciousness and the recognition of this *something* - being 'inadequate', for Oliver, for example emerges only through communication with others and is thus social. The "I" that these men come to understand as being inadequate, and so forth, comes into being through the uptake of others' attitudes and it is via taking on those attitudes that the "me" comes into being. Before expanding on this internal-external dialectic of identification (Jenkins, 2008), which was described in Chapter 3, I will briefly explain the nature of the 'something' that these men come to recognise: the notion of difference.

As described in Chapter 3, difference is a key marker of identification (Jenkins, 2008, Woodward, 1997). Difference from others can be constructed across a multitude of social characteristics, including age, gender, physique and so forth. Moreover, these differences occur through symbolic systems of representation and via social exclusion, located in constructs of 'us' and 'them' (Woodward, 1997). The body as a key marker of difference, can be seen through the fat / thin binary that participants saw as a constraint to sexual relationships, which harmonises with findings in the motivational studies discussed in Chapter 2, regarding difficulties accessing non-commercial partners. Brad's (52, single)

experience of exclusion from intimate relations with women is marked by two separate references to how he is distinct from others:

I've always been overweight and at the end of the day you can't get away from the fact that, they say it's only skin deep sort of thing, but er nobody wants to jump into bed with a fatty at the end of the day... but ... you see a lot of slim men with big girls. But very rarely the other way round ... I can only speak from experience.

Firstly, in relation to other men, by being overweight, he realised this difference and the resultant constraint on his access to taking part in sexual relations.

Secondly, despite significant pressure on women to conform to bodily standards, he made explicit reference to gender differences and signified that, whilst in his experience, overweight women are not hindered in their pursuit for a relationship by this embodied identity, overweight men are. Brad constructs his identity through a process of reflexive introspection. However, as can be seen above, this process although happening internally is reliant on the external social environment; it happens only in relation to others, thus allowing the men to recognise *something* about their identity; that of difference. Similarly, this embodied identity, and marking oneself as different because of being overweight, and thus an outsider to conventional sexual relations, is confirmed by Adam (56, married): 'Where else could an ugly fat bastard like myself get to share the favours of some pretty ... amazing women and in a[n] ... intimate environment?' Both these men draw on the 'binary opposition' of an embodied identity, being overweight as opposed to being the *right* weight to secure sexual

relationships, and demonstrate how being different from others leads to exclusion (Woodward, 1997). Despite Brad's reference to the social acceptance of larger women, many women are also excluded from relationships and could give reasons grounded in their bodies, yet they are less likely to pay for sex. Thus, the men drew on gendered conceptions of what life should be like as a man and the role of sex and relationships within it – and indeed men's roles as individuals within these arenas.

Some participants explicitly referred to being different in relation to other men and not matching up to hegemonic models of masculinity (Connell, 2005). For Mark (47, married) his involvement in commercial sex prior to being married was based on his identification as a 'geek' and what he saw as the inevitable difficulties of obtaining sex: '[Commercial sex is] easier than going to a night club ... "geek needs girl, geek can't find girl, geek pays for sex" .' Edwin (54, married) frames his masculine identity in terms of not being 'a man's man'. He discussed this difference by drawing on binary distinctions between appropriate gendered social activities: 'talking about football with men' in opposition to that which he enjoys, spending time with women and 'discussing soaps'.

Applying Jenkins' (2008) internal-external dialectic of identification, discussed in Chapter 3, both of these men construct themselves as distinct from other men by locating themselves in identities that deviate from hegemonic masculinity, by either being 'geeky', or preferring women's social activities, thus their internal self definition and their external definition by others interact. However, recognition of this failure to adhere to normative masculinity, and the resulting lack of access to sexual relations, can spur action that confirms an action-man

style masculinity, in that real men are active, not passive, confronting problems and taking risks: 'Do you just accept it and carry on with the pipe and slippers and rot in front of the telly, or, do you get up off you back side and do something?' (Oliver, 63, married).

It becomes clear that before engaging in commercial sex, some men in my sample constructed their identities in terms of difference from other men, through an internal-external dialectic of identification. Yet as stated in Chapter 3, Jenkins (2008) suggests, in only recognising difference, one would not be able to state what one actually was. Thus difference alone is inadequate for identification. Implicit in the above narratives, despite the emphasis on difference, is a commonality: these men are all constructing themselves as men, what being a man should feel like against the backdrop of normative masculinity which symbolises "power, rationality, assertiveness and invulnerability" (Segal, 2007: xxiv). Consequently, feelings of 'frustration', 'missing out' and being 'boring', a sense of an identity that they cannot talk about in terms of masculinity, were mentioned by some of the men in my sample, suggesting that while they were different from some men, they were still men and judging their identity accordingly, based on similarity to other men. The recognition of being a man depends on recognising oneself as being similar to other men, but accepting that one is different from an additional gender category, woman, and also recognising that within that category of 'man' there may be many further differences. These differences in terms of a heterosexual male identity will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

However, despite being similar to other men in terms of biological makeup and

thus answerable to normative standards of masculinity, including the desire to have sex (Hollway, 1984; Mooney-Somers and Ussher, 2010), it was a notion of difference from other men that led to a decision to choose to take part in commercial sex.

Crossing the 'Chasm'⁹⁶: boundaries and becoming a client

All the men in my sample actually choose to pay for sex. This practice and experience thus shifted their identity from 'a man who does not pay for sex'(non-client) to 'male client'. The fluidity of identities suggested by Bendle (2001), Jenkins (2008) and Woodward (1997) depends on the notion of boundaries (Jenkins, 2008; Lamont and Molnar, 2002), as discussed in Chapter 3. My interest in the social and cultural aspects of sexual commerce, and the cultural formation of multiple masculine identity positions, have allowed me to tease out the complexities of moving from a non-client to a client identity, highlighting the resources men drew upon, the practices they took part in and how they experienced this movement.

It is important to remember that boundary is an analytic notion, but nonetheless allows the separation between 'us' and 'them' to be explored. As Jenkins (2008) suggests, boundaries are permeable and depend on what people do in practice. Drawing on Lamont and Molnar (2002) I suggest that choosing to pay for sex, crossing the identity boundary from non-client to client through the practice of exchanging money for sex, is dependent on resources available,

⁹⁶ Tom (64, widow-single) used the word 'Chasm'.

including cultural repertoires, institutionalized discourses in the media, and more, as will be demonstrated below.

- Crossing the boundary

Material resources

For some men, crossing the boundary was just something they decided to do one day and they did not recognise or articulate anything more complex. As Patrick (65, divorced-single) told me: '[I] vaguely thought about the idea, and one day decided to try it.' However, there was still an element of process and 'doing', as he then disclosed the material resources from the media that he drew on in order to make his transition, by 'pull[ing] some phone numbers out of the local rag.' Similarly, Charlie (63, married) said:

In those days in the local paper, you couldn't help noticing there were about 50 adverts for different places ... This was well before any internet resources could kind of give you reviews or tell you about what different places were really like.

Nick (52, single), likewise, pointed out that historically the internet was not available as a source of information and thus: 'It was a bit more difficult in them days cos, er, a lot of it was sort of like hidden you know. You didn't know where to look for parlours or whatever. I actually had to travel to London to, er, you know I saw this like, a contact magazine.' Other men were aware of, and directly sought out, these material resources, as Huw (47, married) revealed: 'Google is your friend!' When he first looked up prostitutes, then escorts, he

was 'amazed at what I found ... [and] discovered a new world of high class call girls', demonstrating how shifts pertaining to the commercial sex industry, especially the rise of the internet, as Chapter 2 described, assist in recruiting new members, something returned to below.

For some participants, it was clear that commercial sex was part of their wider social environment, thus implying the 'cultural repertoires' Lamont and Molnar (2002) draw attention to. John (40, married) revealed that whilst working abroad, a café was:

on the route to the school that I was teaching at and, em, I was, em, it wasn't obvious that, er, it was a place, er, that you could go and pay for sex, but I was curious by the set up from the outside, you know what, what was going on in this place? ... [also] on the taxis there was a nightclub advertised called Joe's and, erm, from conversations that I'd had with people, It was obvious that was, er, another place that, er, you could go to, to pay for sex.

Other men discussed UK-based sexual culture and referred explicitly to London and Soho. Bob (50, married) said:

I lived in London, used to walk around Soho, with its sex shops ... One day I went into a walk-up⁹⁷ in Soho and paid for sex with a girl ... If you were in Soho, it was obvious what all the places were and if you

⁹⁷ A walk-up refers to a brothel or parlour where you walk in and there is no need to book in advance.

were going in what for. They all had signs on the door. I picked one that was the most discrete.

Russell (29, single) further commented on the 'Soho Scene', and the ease, abundance and diversity of commercial sex products of all kinds:

[I] found myself wandering into Soho and having a guy to kind of approach you going "Do you want some girls?" Out of the blue ... then it was a case of having like I say just down the road it's like, kind of just going into Soho, discovered all the kind of sex shops, all the kind of Soho book shops and all the kind of alternative kind of lifestyles that there are.

As well as the visible presence of the industry, especially in London, several men commented that their interest had been sparked via media integration of sexual commerce in the broader fabric of cultural and social life:

A helpful article in the Sunday times colour supplement that I read. I have a feeling that I may have seen something in a newspaper article that erm, about the Shepherd's Market area of London (Martin, 55, married)

Then kind of like Billy Piper's *Secret Diary of a Call Girl* came on TV and the book came out ... Read it in a kind of *Arena*, kind of saw bits of it on documentaries over the years, saw the adverts and just thought.

(Russell, 29, single)

These narratives begin to draw attention to the fact that commercial sex does not sit neatly away from non-commercial environments, in fact, it would appear that sexual commerce is heavily intertwined within the wider cultural environment of everyday - routine, familiar and ordinary - life within which these men are living out their masculine heterosexual identities. This commercialisation of sexuality reflected within Hawkes' (1996) liberalization thesis and wider shifts in intimate life, (as Chapter 3 laid out) will be returned to in Chapter 6, further demonstrating the importance of exploring the wider cultural and social environment that paying for sex is located.

Social resources

In addition to material resources, some participants referred to the interactional nature of social life and discussed how the idea of commercial sex had been suggested to them by those in their social networks, either friends or work colleagues:

A conversation with a (female) friend who said "Oh come on, you've been muttering about it for ages. Why don't you just go and do it?"

(Alan, 57, widow -dating)

My first job and one of the blokes I work with, you know, he told me about one of the saunas, er, Charlie's Angels, and says, "Oh it's great, and you go in and you get." So that's, that's how it started. (Simon, 37, single)

As well as colleagues, work provided the opportunity for some men to cross the boundary in two ways, firstly due to working away, which created an opportunity, and secondly, as it was the socially accepted norm:

That I suppose provided the opportunity, erm, cos I was [working] away a lot. The place where I was away a lot, I suppose paid sex is very easy to come by, cos there are a lot of largish brothels ... They seem to be licensed and tolerated ... Erm, I'd also been reading PunterNet but I'd been doing that for a long time, yeh. (Adrian, 54, married)

I had a job which involved me going to Japan several times over about a 14 month period and they [those working with] took me out one weekend and showed me the wonders of a Japanese bath house. I didn't pay for it, they did. That's the thing in society, the directors of the company want to entertain their clients and ... off they go to a place like this. (Jeff, 69, married)

These narratives again highlight the infiltration of sexual commerce into the web of social life, in that paid-for sex integrates into the material resources available through the cultural environment, and into the men's social and work lives.

Negotiations and interactions

The ability to interact with those involved with the sex industry as an outsider seemed to offer men assistance in crossing the boundary and becoming one of 'them'. Allowing, as Lamont and Molnar (2002) argue, resources to be used by

those already within the boundary to recruit new members, bridge boundaries and maintain boundaries, as described in Chapter 3. Interactions took place with both other male clients and female sex workers online, and with female sex workers on the phone:

With the internet you've got lots of stories of other guys saying what it had been like to do it and, erm. The kind of field reports and things like that so you're finding out specifics and, er, about whether you could trust somebody or not. Er, so it's that kind of thing that made me feel more comfortable. (Tom, 64, widow – dating)

I did the usual research on PunterNet ... I found another site Punterlink and chatted with several member inc. many escorts ... many people gave me great advice, including a certain escort ... being able to discuss directly with the escort was very important to me ... agencies will "mostly" tell you anything just to get the booking ... being able to talk with other escorts before had no longer made me feel guilty or dirty about seeing escorts. (Sebastian*⁹⁸, 29, single)

For Felix* (34, single) the opportunity to communicate across the boundary and engage directly with other actors involved in the sex industry, through speaking on the phone provided reassurance: 'The person on the phone sounded quite friendly.' As well as the phone, email was used to contact the women, as Alan (57, widow-dating) discussed: 'I emailed really rather cos I didn't know what to expect really. Told her it was my first time, blah, de, blah, erm, made the

⁹⁸ An * demotes that this interview was conducted using MSN. I have left the transcripts as close to the original as possible

appointment ... didn't really know what to expect.' Through negotiating the boundary between the commercial and the non-commercial the previously marked division between the two blurred, allowing the men to engage with the stigmatised and unknown social milieu of sexual commerce directly, yet also at a distance, via technologies such as the Internet. The shifts in the commercial sex industry following the expansion of the internet, as discussed in Chapter 2, illustrate that the internet is a 'boundary object', located in two intersecting worlds (Bowker and Starr, 1999), utilised to alleviate fears and facilitate the transition to paying for sex, and also ensuring that the boundary is maintained by recruiting new members.

As already shown for many men, the process of becoming a client began before actually taking part in the encounter. Crossing the boundary was stimulated by many factors, including both the material and social resources which make up the fabric of social life, and was facilitated through utilising boundary objects, which allowed communication across the boundary, alleviating fear. The discussion above thus emphasises the importance of the social and cultural environment within which identification occurs, especially when moving between identities. I now turn to the actual encounter and the process and practice of crossing the boundary, and how identifying as a client through the practice of paying for sex, highlighted the emotional element of identity transition.

- The emotional element of ‘crossing the chasm’

This section discusses the experience of paying for sex in terms of emotional engagement and discusses how the men *felt* about moving from the perceived mundane to the exotic, highlighting the variety of experiences and the conflicting nature of their emotions. In order to understand this, it is essential to explore how the men perceived those involved in the industry, before they themselves became clients, how participants placed these actors in a *collective category*. Within collective identification the internal-external dialectic of identification comes into play, as Chapter 3 explained. The internal aspect refers to how members recognise themselves, and the external concerns how membership is stipulated by an observer.

As Chapter 2 suggested, media, political and legal institutions are part of a process of locating clients in a negative category. The majority of participants had limited knowledge of the industry and as such their categorisation before they became involved, of both sex workers and clients, was dependant on dominant stereotypes, institutionalised discourses and resultant labels. During interviews, men were able to recall and reflect on their previous ‘outsider’ categorisation of men who pay for sex, their perceptions mirroring the work discussed in Chapter 2 concerning contamination and control. Disease was a common theme, as Adam (56, married) said a significant concern for him was: ‘“Oh my God! I’m going to get a disease” .’ References to criminal activity were also made, in addition to former perceptions of the industry as ‘sleazy’, ‘dirty’, or ‘drug-ridden’. In contrast to this, some men also drew on the

distinctions between street sex work and 'high class call girls'. Other negative images such as the women taking as much money as possible in return for very little, or, of being of low intelligence, were mentioned. In forming these perceptions of others, it was evident that the men drew on classifications available in institutionalised discourses. The power of such discourses will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

Widespread reference was made to the media's role in this categorisation process. John (40, married) disclosed how he felt he had been: 'conditioned' by images in the newspapers, and Matt (58, married) also recalled that he got his ideas from: 'the way the media like to portray it.' Whilst Oliver (63, married) explicitly recognised the bias and sensationalisation tactics of the media, claiming that his initial perceptions were constructed around 'media hype'. The normality of these views within wider society was mentioned by Felix* (32, single), who felt that his initial awareness of only the lower end of the market 'would be like most people's'. This implied that before paying for sex some men thought they were *different* to those involved in the sex industry and their opinions were *similar* to those who shared their outsider status⁹⁹. With limited contact with the industry, some men in my sample constructed identities with the information available to them, reflecting the ideas about and categorisations of 'them' within institutionalised media discourses, which in turn reflect policy and abolitionist research agendas. The impact of drawing on such discourses in

⁹⁹ An interesting point to note here is that before men became involved in the industry, most of the perceptions and categorisations involved reference to female sex workers with clients being absent, thus reflecting policy, media and research attention which has focused typically on sex workers and rendered clients invisible.

terms of how the men direct their practices within sexual commerce will be explored in Chapter 7.

Despite the fact that commercial sex is frequently thought to be devoid of emotion, an idea which has been challenged by Laver and Dolnick (2000) and Sanders (2008a), amongst others, as Chapter 2 explored - the following narratives show that entrance into commercial sex can be a highly emotive experience, frequently framed by the institutionalised discourses discussed above. Moving from one identity to another can thus be a complex and emotive process, fraught with anxieties. Participants in my sample frequently described a shift from initial feelings of nervousness, as Sanders (2008a) found, to relief after the boundary had been crossed. Ben (61, married) described the nervousness of the encounter, due to his preconceived constructions of the sex industry, including both his behaviour as a client, and the sex worker's behaviour. He referred to his lack of knowledge, which as Holland *et al.* (1998) suggest, and as Chapter 3 explored, is often assumed to be simply part of normal male heterosexual identity:

I was just a nervous wreck an absolute. I kept asking myself, "Am I doing the right thing?" And then when she didn't turn up on time and there was no phone call or anything. I thought, "Well it's obviously fate and it's not meant to be!" But it was just a case of, she was lost ...

Within 10, 15 minutes of actually meeting her and sitting down in the hotel with a bottle of wine and we started to talk to each other, I just started to feel more and more comfortable in her company ... I suppose,

pleased that the encounter had gone in, such a pleasant encounter because, as I say, I had preconceived ideas and I wasn't sure, er, what to expect. What would happen, erm, how she would act, how she'd expect me to act. I mean it was all totally new to me. I hadn't a clue as to what I was supposed to do or when I was supposed to do anything, you know, who made the first move. You know, as I say, we sat there for probably half an hour chatting and drinking wine. At the time it was crossing my mind, "Do I suggest that we go to bed now or do I wait for her to say something?" You know all these things were, you know unknowns. But, er, I'd say, at the end of the evening, erm, when she went, I was already planning to see her again cos it was, er, it was pleasant. It wasn't just the physical aspect of things; it was the companionship, the, the, erm, intimacy, of course. But it was fun.

Constructions of danger and fear of not knowing what to do where similarly described by Adam (56, married) He was worried that as he did not know what he was doing, or what to expect, he would make a fool of himself, as well as failing to meet other expectations of himself regarding the sex workers' pleasure:

Before I went in, I was ... scared that I'd make a fool of me self, erm, worried cos I didn't know what I was meant to be doing. Erm, I knew what the mechanics of it were, the sort of plugs and sockets and all that bit. But never having been with a girl for money before, I didn't know whether you paid up front, whether you paid her even? You know or

that you paid somebody else. I didn't know whether there'd be people, you know bouncers type of thing around, or dogs or. I didn't, I didn't have a clue ... So, so it was erm, it was, "Oh my God, is this gonna", you know, you know erm, sort of daft things like, "You know, is my penis big enough?" Erm there were all sorts of different worries going through my head about it and in fact when I came out I was thinking "Well that was, that was really nice, I thoroughly enjoyed meself and there was nothing to worry about at all, that was easy".

As implied above, and by Alan below, the nervousness felt before encounters was reduced by the emotional labour of the sex worker putting the men at ease. For Alan, this nervousness shifted into a sense of 'bravado', so whilst the sex itself was not a confirmation of masculine identity, actually engaging in paid-for sex, coupled with being in a sexual situation with a woman, was:

When I saw her she was very chatty. She put me at my ease pretty easily. She was very funny, a lot of laughs. The sex was appalling. Erm, I really couldn't manage anything, but I came away actually feeling much better than I had when I went for some reason. Erm, I mean in retrospect when I look back on it and think of some of the women I saw afterwards, then it really wasn't a desperately good experience. But ... basically I got some flesh to flesh contact which is what, really, what I wanted. I was perfectly happy with that ... I was terribly nervous before I went I think the feeling after was almost bravado – "I'd done it". You know? ... the feeling wasn't particularly sexual, as I say the sex

was pretty much nonexistent ... I think it was as much simply the fact of being naked with a woman again. Erm, to feel the flesh, the touch I think was probably the most important thing I got out of it ... Difficult to explain. (Alan, 57, widow – dating)

Sebastian* (29, single) described: 'I [was] ... nervous, anxious, could not sleep ... I was no longer worried about getting caught or actually seeing a working girl. Mainly worried about firstly going thru with it and of course performance issues.' Here the burden of masculine heterosexuality, in terms of fear of rejection, or performance issues, as described in Chapter 3, crossed over into the commercial realm, thus suggesting that both commercial and non-commercial experiences can evoke fear and nervousness and are not so different.

Some participants choose to manage nervousness and thus boundary crossing by explicitly seeking out sex workers who were experienced and would be able to provide a less awkward encounter. Brad (52, single) described how a friend advised him to visit a woman who was experienced:

I was very nervous as you can imagine. I suppose again he said to me ... "Go and see one which's been doing it a long time and she'll be used to getting first timers and this sort of thing and put you at ease". He wasn't wrong there ... at some point during it she sussed that out and asked me. I didn't tell her before I went, but by the end of it she did ... I suppose it was a mixture of nervousness and excitement and I felt afterwards was

relief. Not, not just because of, you know? Just cos I'd finally seen what it [sex] was like really.

Tom (64, widow-single) sought to reduce his nervousness by not taking part in what he thought of as 'full sex'. By drawing on the categories discussed above, pertaining to those involved in the sex industry, Tom imagined that this approach offered him a safer way of trying commercial sex out:

It wasn't to a massage parlour, erm it was to somebody who advertised on the internet. She's pretty unique in that she doesn't advertise full sex ... I had a lot of doubts and worries about disease you know and all these fantasies and stereotypes coming forward. So I thought it'd be a really, a really safe way of trying things out ... it just felt like a safe way of trying it out and if that didn't work, I'd never have done it again, you know?

These narratives show how men I spoke to crossed the boundary into commercial sex, a domain understood to be in opposition to a normative masculine ideal, with strong feelings of nervousness and anxiety evoked, as well as concerns about a lack of knowledge of what to do. However, once men had crossed, it appears that constructions of those involved in the sex industry obtained from institutionalized discourses were rejected, and a normative masculine identity was returned to. The pervasiveness of anxieties around performance, penis size and inappropriate social behaviour, does, however, give strong indications of continuities between the commercial and non-

commercial, despite men's sense of boundary-crossing and the wider cultural framing of sexual commerce through stigma.

Boundary Work

The above discussion explored how the men in my sample constructed their identity as different from other men who were sexually successful or who had access to women, and the resultant boundary crossing processes they engaged with to address this difference. However, as Jenkins (2008) argues, focusing on only difference is problematic and would undermine the possibility of collective identity. I wish to focus on the notion of similarity once the men become clients, concerning how the boundary between 'us' and 'them', as clients and non-clients, is maintained, emphasising how developments within the commercial sex industry have influenced these processes of identification. This again highlights the importance of both social and cultural analyses of identity and sexual commerce.

As explored in Chapter 2, the rise of the internet has offered clients greater access to others, both sex workers and clients, involved in the industry. Blevins and Holt's (2009) exploration of clients suggests that the online subculture of the message boards is forged by interconnected norms of experience, sexuality and commodification. However, they argue that within these shared norms notions of similarity and difference pertain, such as the different terms used to identify those with extensive knowledge and experience (pooners) and those with less experience (newbies). As the internet was used as a method of recruitment, it was not surprising that many participants in this study were both

aware of online forums and also utilised them in some way. Some men posted frequently, whilst others took a more 'lurker'¹⁰⁰ type role. For the men in my study, the anonymity offered by the internet was recognised as a key feature encouraging the telling of sexual stories online, as Felix* (34, single) explained: 'commercial sex is still a taboo subject among men, although they will discuss it online together but not in person.' This ability to chat online, albeit anonymously, offered confirmation of similarity, belonging and 'us', as Martin (55, married) explained through a comparison with his non-commercial activities:

[communicating via the message boards is] chat with likeminded people ... some other punters have said to me that it's very important to have this sense that they are not alone, that there are others out there, there are people with whom you can talk about these things ... It's like the equivalent of going down to the pub for a drink and a chat for half an hour to go on the message board.

- Normalisation

The sense of not being alone in inhabiting the client identity led to a degree of normalisation in my sample, as Sharp and Earle (2003) also argue. There was frequent reference by participants to there being: 'nothing wrong with it'; '[not having] any problems with it'; 'another option'; '[a] hobby ... a pleasant way to fill your spare time.' The commercial aspect was drawn upon in a bid to

¹⁰⁰ Lurker refers to people who read and use the information online without contributing (Sanders, 2008: 64).

normalise involvement, Russell (29, single) constructed the women as, 'doing their job. They're kind of contractual kind of employee; you're hiring them out to be with you for several hours... it's kind of very business-like.' This normalisation occurred in parallel with a sense of collective belonging amongst the men:

I don't think the girls are doing anything wrong and I don't think I'm doing anything wrong ... the people you're dealing with are just normal everyday people just like I am ... there's no real difference in terms of what people are. There's just a difference in the jobs that they do and it is, you know, for the vast majority of people, well people I mix with it, it is a job that they're doing. (Dave, 56, widow-dating)

Dave normalises both himself and the women involved, and draws on relations of similarity and difference by claiming that the women are no different to those outside the industry, they just choose different employment. Similarly he asserts that he is different from others outside the commercial sex industry by implying that the people he is associated with tend to be involved in commercial sex, whereas this may not be the case for others. The contextually-located 'ordinariness' of both the industry and the women involved was also highlighted by some men. In several cases, processes of identification regarding similarity moved from online interactions to offline interactions:

About once a year there will be some kind of select gathering, where a few trusted punters might get together for a drink or a meal with some

working girls. Just to compare notes about our outsider sub-culture and have a bit of a laugh. Mutual support. (Tom, 63, married)

In order for this movement to occur, however, this notion of similarity was built upon notions of trust and exclusivity, in which the client identity must be validated by others (this will be returned to later). The men suggested this allowed both clients and sex workers to compare experiences of participating in activities which create an 'us' and 'them'. Furthermore, this process of identification based on similarity was a mechanism of support, along with recognition that their activities sit outside conventional norms. To take heed of Jenkins' (2008) warning that to focus on only difference is inadequate, these data show that similarity and difference intertwined within the client identity. Indeed there were various markers of similarity and difference that men drew on when reflecting upon their identity as a client, including encounter expectations and how *they* are experienced by the sex workers:

I know that you'll have interviewed [*a participant who posts on a message board that both men use*]. And he's probably similar; he's more like me in a sense that it's the intimacy and not just the shagging. (Josh, 54, married)

If she's a regular girl and other clients come up in conversation, then I'm interested; mainly to see how I compare to other punters, in terms of being considerate and seen as a decent client. (Tom, 64, widow-single)

Tom thus describes a hierarchy of identities by demonstrating the contextual nature of identity, in that he desires to be respected by the women he visits. He constructs this respect as being a considerate and decent client within the stigmatised environment of paid-for sex. As has been discussed so far, identity is a process which relies on both internal and external definition, invokes notions of the relationship between similarity and difference and is relational, therefore relying on interaction. These aspects of this process are fundamental to identifying as a client, from starting the journey into commercial sex, normalising ones' behaviour, and, whilst inhabiting a stigmatised identity, locating oneself further up the hierarchy than other clients. Having already established that identity is constructed in relation to others, it is important to consider how identity is *performed* for others, which is where the discussion will now turn.

- Performance

By drawing on Goffman's (1971) idea of identity as a performance, I wish to further emphasise the relational aspect of identification. Being relational and relying on others through interaction suggests an audience: someone or ones who identity is done with or for. For clients there are two key spaces where identity is performed in relation to commercial sex, firstly in the actual commercial sex encounter and secondly online. Goffman (1971), via the metaphor of theatrical performance, illustrates how actors perform differently depending on the audience and how participants work in conjunction to define the situation, as described in Chapter 3.

The prevalence and use of online message boards is now well documented within the commercial sex literature, as Chapter 2 argued (see Blevins and Holt, 2009; Earle and Sharp, 2008b). As well as being a site of information exchange, the boards also allow the performance and confirmation of client identity for some participants (Katsulis, 2009; Sanders, 2008a). Sanders (2008a) argues that the message boards are a space where clients can 'meet', performing the client role whilst establishing successful sexual performance and identity. The message boards also set a standard for the behaviour of clients. These online performances were construed as both positive and negative by my participants. Notions of similarity were used to explain how the men confirmed their own client identity through others' performance online: 'The field reports ... you know it's another guy posting and you notice you have the same experiences with a particular area or with particular people (Paul, 64, married). In engaging with the message boards clients either chat, exchange information, post about a certain issue, or offer guidance, all of which require an audience. This audience then confirms or in some cases questions, the participant's identity as a client. Below are two different field reports (FR) in terms of details given and thus demonstrate two very different *performances* of client identity.

Time of Day: 12:00

Type of Visit: Incall

Time Spent: 30 mins

Price: 70

Her Place: Excellent Parlour Very Clean & Organised

Description: Wow!

Slim, approximate size 6, tanned with fantastic body. All natural - a complete gem.

Comments: As soon as got to The Happy Palace, Lorna the receptionist was fantastic and put me at ease while I waited, introducing me to the ladies and making sure that I was OK, offering me a drink etc and just talking about my day.

After reading the reports, I thought I would test drive Mercedes - and I was not disappointed. From the moment Mercedes entered the room, I was given a big smile and she jumped onto the bed. A bit of talking to put me at ease and then the best OWO¹⁰¹ that I have ever had. Asked whether Mercedes would like a bit of oral and yes she did. Perfect pussy in my face while I played with her natural breasts. Thought it could not get any better until she got on top and started riding me with the wettest pussy that I have had - and I've been around. Finished by taking her from behind which we both enjoyed. Great ass by the way. After, I went down until she came and then spent 5 mins kissing. The best GFE I have ever had with a beautiful young lady. I will definately be returing to see Mercedes understatement :-)

Recommended: Yes

Would You Yes

Return:

(<http://www.punternet.com>)

Time of Day: 1100

Type of Visit: Incall

Time Spent: 45

Price: 75

Her Place: Very nice. Best shower room I've seen.

Description: Simply the best. Just as her photos, only better. Very nice.

Comments: Very friendly and warm. Made me feel right at home. Nothing was too much trouble. Wonderful boobs...

Recommended: Yes

¹⁰¹ OWO stands for receiving oral sex without a condom.

**Would You Yes
Return:**

(<http://www.punternet.com>)

The first graphic description focuses on both his performance in the encounter and the sex worker's perceived pleasure; allowing him to demonstrate his successful masculine identity. The second has very few details apart from simply recommending the woman in question and providing some basic details. So, in the second account, whilst he is performing his identity as a client through writing the field report, he is not drawing attention to and seeking validation of his heterosexual masculine identity via detailing his own sexual performance. The first field report as a 'performance' of one's own identity is recognised within online communities, confirmed by a further discussion on Punternet generally concerning field reports of this type: '... the orgasmic excitement of seeing ones's own nic¹⁰² visible to the world at the head of an exaggerated FR (and then, for my seventh ejaculation, I...)'

(www.punternet.com).

Through this online performance, external validation of 'client', and 'successful sexual male' identity occurs. This is internalised and the meeting of the external–internal dialectic is where the process of identification becomes apparent (Goffman, 1959). The internet also, as Blevins and Holt (2009) describe, allows men to validate their client identity through online performances by demonstrating the extent of their own experience: 'People want advice and er ... you get guys that perhaps, especially from the guys that have never done it

¹⁰² Nic stands for online user identity

before and they find themselves in a difficult position, they need a bit of friendly advice' (Oliver, 63, married).

The above quote, referring to giving new message board members advice about what to expect, was common amongst participants. The online subculture sought to normalise and de-stigmatise commercial sex for some men in my sample. Despite Blevins and Holt claiming that new members were given less respect, Sanders' (2008a) research defined beginners as 'one of us', individuals to welcome into the collectivity by alleviating their fears, offering information and advice on where to go, how to behave and what to expect, as my participants themselves described when they were crossing the boundary discussed above. On PunterNet there are discussions which question the validity of field reports and thus the individual's client identity. Indeed, there is a general consensus that many 'fake' field reports are written by sex workers advertising. However, as the comment below suggests, it may be that the person who wrote the report is new to sexual commerce and is unaware of how to perform the client identity online:

Ok so its not very informative other than her new contact details but that doesn't mean its fake some people just dont really know what to write when they submit a FR. Innocent until proven guilty and all that..... let the newbies be 😊 im sure G¹⁰³ has been around long enough to know what he's doing and if there are alarms to ring im sure he'll do so if not you guys are going to give a newbie a complex about their writing skills

¹⁰³ G refers to the owner of the board

and maybe they will stay as only one report ever written

(PunterNet.com)

Field reports and online identity performance were not always seen in a positive light. A 'risk' of the online performance of identity through field reports was suggested by Jason (51, single) below:

I thought that sort of information was supposed to be more or less confidential between you and the girl ... it surprised me that they were actually openly putting it on the internet cos ... it's a bit incriminating really cos. The police could use that as the girl had accepted money. You're not really supposed to prove that so I was a bit worried that punters were doing the wrong thing.

His concern about this online performance again implies two separate issues, first that the information should be kept private between the two parties, similar to a discourse which locates sex in the private sphere, and also the possible legal implications that these communications expose. Thus he asserts that through these online performances clients are doing the *wrong* thing.

Josh (54, married) made reference to the fact that some clients who post regularly on PunterNet:

don't do a lot of punting ... Some of those PunterNet reports ... "She slurped up my you know" and all this stuff and you think. Including some of the reports of the lady I go and see ... Sometimes she says "I can't remember, I don't think I was there".

He implies that instead of this being an accurate representation of a client's experience, it was simply a fantasy that they were reliving: one which incorporates a performance of virile successful masculinity. This performance thus matches hegemonic masculine norms, but requires validation via the internalisation of others attitudes; the internal-external dialectic.

This perceived 'fantasy' production was also constructed as 'bragging'. Online bragging as a method of validating one's identity was often received in negative terms by participants. Again Josh discussed the type of clients who have a preference for the 'porn star experience' and 'want to bandy it about' claiming though that not everyone was like that. Josh thus presents his performance online as different than these other men who seek to have their identities validated via these online revelations. Moreover, he cites his superior 'inside' knowledge of the sex worker as evidence for his interpretation of others men's 'fantasies'.

As mentioned above, some field reports, and field reports generally are commented on during discussions on the main message board of such sites, where the authenticity of some reports are questioned. Others are seen as too graphic, and the content of what is necessary is debated. Consequently the way some clients' perform the client identity is questioned. Bragging for example, is defined by performing a specific masculine identity: being sexually very active. Commercial sex is seen as an achievement of this masculine identity which can be validated, even if in *negative* terms, through online performances:

I say those people must be a lot more sexually active than me. They sort of see it as some sort of trophy hunting. I think they must be to actually write about it ... There's one thing actually going to a prostitute, there's another thing sort of boasting about it isn't it. It's part of the male psyche isn't it? (Jason, 51, single)

One participant admitted boasting; yet, regarding identity validation, it had a dual purpose: bragging and also to 'establish credibility' (Harold*, 43, married), so that the women would trust him if he emailed them looking to make an appointment. Consequently, for Harold, posting field reports was a way of performing his identity as a client and ensuring that it is validated – but with (legitimate) intent. Thus, as the sex worker advertises herself, so can the client, and his identity can be validated through his online performance as a legitimate client, leading to appointments and then, throughout the encounter, to being a man. Bragging and faking are different: boasting enables self-definition as a willing client and, as Harold explains, may be undertaken to increase the possibility of future successful satisfactory encounters. Faking, however, can be interpreted as a fantasy production of a certain sexually competent masculine identity which is performed and displayed online.

However, online performances are not the only place where identity can be confirmed or rejected. Returning to Mead's (1934) "I" and "me" helps unveil how some men in my sample reflected on their perceptions of themselves positively. But this reflexive introspection was also dependant on the sex worker confirming his positive identity. There were frequent references to

commercial sex being a 'confidence builder', helping to reduce shyness, and affirming that one could 'hold an evening together with a girl'. As the sex worker performs her identity of interested desiring female, she confirms the man's identity of interesting, desirable and sexually successful male, as the work discussed in Chapter 2 regarding strip clubs suggests (Frank, 2003; Murphy, 2003). Further dependence on the sex worker's performance of reciprocity, however illusory this may be (Plumridge *et al.*, 1997a; Sanders, 2008a), was reflected in the men's perception that they had gained knowledge through commercial sex and become sexually competent, a sign of successful heterosexual masculinity, again reflecting the internal-external dialectic: 'I have got more confident in the knowledge that I am attractive and I can attract women when I want to ... it's probably because I can turn a woman on and I know how to do it so that knowledge has given me confidence' (Will*, 30, single).

Reference within my sample was also made to being 'happier', 'more productive', and to improvements in 'general health and well being and physical condition'. However, as well as internalising positive aspects, the more negative aspects of being a client were expressed by some men. Suggesting their masculine performances in non-commercial contexts were not validated, showing discrepancies between 'us' and 'them' in non-commercial contexts, challenging masculine heterosexuality. Such discrepancies concerned men's sense of themselves as failures in their non-commercial sexual and relationship contexts. Jason (51, single) referred to feeling 'inadequate socially', highlighting: '[I would] like to do that (sex) with a proper girlfriend.' Charlie

(63, married) also said that if he had been wiser when younger then he would not have married the person he did and his sexual life could thus have been different:

Ending up punting is not how I'd hoped it would go ... There's a tinge of regret in some punting experiences ... [it] brings home that things have not gone well in my life in sexual ways ... things didn't work out ideally in the way I'd have liked them to have worked out in my marriage.

These narratives begin to reveal the complexities of the commercial / non-commercial dichotomy and suggest that they may not always sit in separate spheres. There is a leakage across the boundary, in that by being a client Charlie reflected upon his non-commercial sex life and thus his non-commercial identity.

The men in my sample drew heavily on popular notions of masculinity. For them achieving, what they perceived to be a 'successful' masculinity as popularly defined, was represented in terms of their sexuality and heterosexual experiences, thus their identity is validated or rejected through their performances for, and interactions with, others. Tony* (42, married) explained that being involved in commercial sex made him realise that he has: 'missed out on a whole life style by being Mr. Grey'. In a similar fashion, Tom (64, widow – dating) highlighted the difference between himself and other men who have not taken part in commercial sex, drawing on cultural norms and suggesting the power of discourses to stigmatise and discriminate:

[I have never] come out as a fully sexual being, in the sense that I feel I have to not let on to a lot of people how sexual I am, cos you get labelled as a dirty old man or a sex maniac or something. There're sort of norms in society about how sexual you're allowed to be and still be respectable, and if I was a woman I'd be called a slut I suppose, but I don't know what the word'd be for a bloke.

John (40, married) also described how being a client is his only 'sexual outlet' and he wishes for something different. In claiming this, he implies that this is possible outside of commercial sex for some men, and that he is different from them in not being able to achieve this in that setting, resulting in him having to manage the front and back stages of his heterosexual masculine identity, performing differently for different audiences:

[I'd like a marital relationship] where's there's no bullshit involved, where I don't have to put on any masks, where I can, I can be sexual in myself really ... take my clothes off and be who I am and just say, you know this is, this is me, this is what I am, I am a man, let me be a man.

As can be seen, identification requires interaction with others and a performance which must be validated or rejected, if rejected in one context, my data suggest that the men move to a different context to enable the required identity, that of heterosexual male, to be confirmed. Yet this is not straightforward and changing to a different identity results in further reflection on one's selfhood.

- Us versus them

As stated above, once one takes part in commercial sex as a male client, one is no longer just part of the wider *external categorisation* of the collective 'client' identity; instead, *internal group* identification as a 'client' also takes place, for some men that I spoke to¹⁰⁴. However, as with individual identity, and as explained in Chapter 3, it is the meeting of the internal and external that characterises the process of identification. As such, in order to produce group identification the men drew on the external categorisations of wider society, but also, frequently, rejected them when defining group identification (Jenkins, 2008). The particular environment in which the research took place needs to be recognised here. The government review and the murder of five sex workers in Ipswich, as mentioned in Chapter 1, resulted in powerful reactions from some participants. Political and social representations of the client identity, including their own perceptions when they crossed the boundary, as discussed above, were firmly denied, and as the men attempted to disassociate from negative representations they simultaneously invoked criteria of *similarity* within *group* membership of this identity. Institutionalised discourses, described in Chapter 2, in the form of political debates, policy reviews and proposed state sanctions were perceived to be distorted, biased, frightening and a poor representation of the industry. Joe drew on victim / abuser discourses, similar to those in abolitionist arguments (see Farley, 2004) as described in Chapter 2, by referring to the power of the state in generating these institutionalised discourses and influencing attitudes. This was explicitly recognised by Jack (56, married) who

¹⁰⁴ I am not claiming this is true for all the men I spoke to, or for all men who pay for sex.

said that commercial sex is not seen as acceptable and that there is a:
'puritanical government that would like to control our sexual behaviour as they try to control everything in our lives.'

The power of collective identity becomes apparent here. The negative images of the client identity were used to strengthen group membership and ties in the form of some sort of battle between 'us' and 'them' which invoked notions of solidarity and commonality within the group, demonstrating boundary maintenance and the desire to look after one's own kind (Lamont and Molnar, 2002). Furthermore, Matt (58, married) explained that: 'misunderstanding and ... stereotyping about the commercial sex ... [meant that] the portrayals about it in the media [are] so frequently so wide of the mark.' This perceived 'misrepresentation' led to action in that some men claimed to take part in my research to get their voice across and put the record straight. Due to inhabiting the stigmatised identity of client, they felt that they had no other platform for their voices, and thus their experiences of sexual commerce:

There are so many false ideas about it and there are disturbing reports as to what might be er the nature of future legislation in the area and. So much of what gets said on the subject is so completely wrong ... The ladies do not conform to the, you know standard er stereotypes. And er I suspect that we don't either ... So I mean it is in the interest of truth that ... I have taken part in this. (Martin, 55, married)

You get so many flip, erm, remarks ... People are making remarks cos they think that is the expected attitude about it or they think that's what

people who do it must be like, and very few people are going to stand up and argue in the middle of the pub or dinner party and start telling people what it's really like. So you need an opportunity for a voice.

(Paul, 64, married)

Identification is not based solely on individual identity, but also in terms of categorisation of 'us' and 'them' in terms of collectivities. Identifying as part of the wider identity of being a male client can lead to solidarity and collective action, such as taking part in my research. Thus through boundary processes of normalisation, collective belonging and performance, the client identity is sustained. However, this experience is not the same for all men and indeed as suggested above, all clients, despite a wider sense of collective belonging are *not* perceived to be the same, as will be discussed below.

Multiple Identities

Among the men interviewed, masculinity intersected with various social markers such as marital status, age, education, employment history, and the extent of their commercial sex involvement. The men in my sample are thus different from one and another in many ways, thus within the wider client identity, taking on many different sub- identities. As Lawler argues and as discussed in Chapter 3, the "combining of multiple identities in an additive way ... identities impact on each other", they are not placed "on top" of one and other, instead they interact (Lawler, 2008: 3). Furthermore, intersectionality, in terms of identities leaking into one another, has been suggested above, as the men reflect on their non-commercial lives through their paid-for sex

involvement. Consequently, being a married client is different to being a single client, which is different to being a client who is going through a divorce, in terms of both experience and meaning.

The data suggest that after the men became involved in commercial sex, they undertook various processes of identification, differentiating themselves not just from women through their heightened sense of gender identity, and from other 'successful' men, but also from other clients. Alan (57, widow –dating) differentiates himself by age: he explained that conversations with sex workers revealed that they have many younger clients in their 20s and 30s yet he thought, 'it was all dirty old men like me'. Further key signifiers of differentiation concerned relationships status and which sex markets were visited. Some of the single men, such as Felix* (34, single), held the married men in low regard and constructed them as different from himself: '[I don't think] much of married men ... I hate married men who shower working girls with gifts and probably treat their wives like dirt.' He also stated that he has never been unfaithful to a non-commercial partner through his commercial sex activities. Both Jason (51, single) and Nick (52, single) also separate themselves from their married counterparts by claiming that paying for sex when married is hypocritical, wrong and an act of betrayal, with both of these men claiming that if they were married then they would not take part in commercial sex. By separating themselves from what they perceive to be less acceptable forms of behaviour, these men constructed themselves as different, and in what could be a bid to justify and excuse their behaviour, they generate a moral hierarchy, placing themselves above others. This reflects the

hierarchisation of all sexual identities, with paedophiles and other stigmatised identities, including those involved in commercial sex towards, the bottom and heterosexual marriage at the top. Within the identity of client, then, for some men, there are further sub-identities of 'us' which are more or less acceptable than 'them'.

This hierarchisation can also be seen in the spaces where commercial sex activities were undertaken. Those men who frequented street sex workers were placed at the bottom of the hierarchy by men in my sample. Some men were very clear about the difference between themselves and those who visited street spaces and explicitly sought to differentiate 'them' from 'us'. Adrian (54, married), associated street sex work with violence and found it challenging to comprehend 'who'd want to make love to someone who's got bruises all over them?' Other men talked about how they'd 'never dream of dealing with the street' or it being 'worlds apart' from their involvement. In this way they recognised the 'less savoury' areas, without claiming to frequent them, which will be returned to in Chapter 7. It can be seen here that this recognition of the 'darker' side of the industry allowed some men to create a hierarchy of identities which, whilst they might be taking part in a stigmatised activity themselves, places them higher up the hierarchy than other men, creating a more positive sense of themselves when compared with men associated with negative areas of the sex industry. This can lead to them normalising their behaviour and identity and also, as Woodward (1997) states, excluding 'others' within the wider identity of being a client. The role of the internet in benchmarking acceptable standards, as Chapter 2 described, and as implied in

the discussion above regarding normalisation, is key. Multiple identity positions though can be challenging. As Felix and others suggest above, relationship status can present different challenges for those inhabiting different identity positions, as will be discussed in more detail below.

Conflicting Identities

The interaction of multiple identities could also create a sense of conflict for the men in my study who felt they were taking on a stigmatised identity. Drawing on the work discussed in Chapter 3 by Link and Phelan (2001), who expand Goffman's (1968) idea that stigma is the relationship between attribute and stereotype, the distinguishing and labelling of difference in conjunction with widely held beliefs linking the labelled person to the characteristic are central to spoiled identities. This labelling creates an 'us' and 'them' categorisation. The construction of clients by wider society in institutionalised discourse has been discussed in Chapter 2, and mentioned above in reference to how the men themselves drew on such discourses before they had paid for sex and sought to challenge such constructions once they had crossed the boundary into the client identity. So in order to explore clients' experiences of this spoiled identity and its management, which Link and Phelan argue is absent from much work on stigma, the men's perceptions of how wider society see them and the resultant consequences will be discussed.

- Consequences and condemnation

As already discussed, the men claim that wider society generally see men who pay for sex and those involved in the industry in a negative manner. Joe highlights the dichotomous construction of clients and sex workers, drawing on drug abuse and violence rhetoric, discussed in Chapter 2, where the women were seen to be constructed as: 'poor, abused, desperate junkies ... earning ... crack' and the men as: 'terrible, abusive, paedophile, murdering bastards ... seeking their next victim' (Joe, 56, divorced-single). Josh (54, married) discussed how people not involved in the industry 'would associate it with street walkers ... trafficking and drugs'. Oliver (63, married) described how it is not surprising that general society takes on these constructions as it is 'difficult ...for the general public to get an unbiased and honest opinion ...it's very difficult for people, especially punters ... to stick their heads up and say "look here" you know "this is what the reality is" '. Thus he draws attention to the power exercised over stigmatised people in terms of discrimination and ensuring silence, which both Link and Phelan (2001) and Parker and Aggleton (2003) address, as discussed in Chapter 3.

The relationship between attribute and stereotype (Link and Phelan, 2001) can further be seen in the men's perception of the wider belief 'that anything outside of a normal man - woman relationship is weird or disgusting' and how the mixing of the intimate, private act of sex with money 'goes against all laws and religions'. Nick (52, single) made explicit reference to the gendered nature of sex work, which challenges governmental and religious principles, as female

sex workers are targeted especially by the media with resultant status loss and discrimination; yet 'male sex workers escape prejudice because patriarchal society is still afraid of women expressing sexual freedom', similar to the ideas of sex 'work' proponents such as Alexander (1997). However, these negative constructions of men who pay for sex, of being discreditable, only become important if they carry a consequence (Goffman, 1968; Link and Phelan, 2001). As such, the data reveal that different men endure different consequences depending on the multiple identities that they inhabit.

Leo* (37, single) found the consequences of taking on this identity meant that he became: 'more lonely ... the more real life got difficult the easier it was just to pay a girl.' He discussed this in the context of breaking 'a taboo that would more than likely ruin me if anyone found out'. Furthermore, upon recollecting about the first time he paid for sex, he mentioned the legal consequences especially as he saw a street sex worker: 'I panicked all day at work the next day and thought that the police would come and get me.' Thus Leo describes the fear of becoming discredited. John (40, married) discussed how:

I experience myself as fairly normal, but I can believe that other people that I work with would think "Jesus Christ", if they knew all of this part of my life, they'd think "Fucking hell, what kind of a weirdo is this guy?" ... I don't think that it is ... maybe it is completely weird for someone to do what I do ... I don't see the kind of sexual acts that I engage in as kind of as being any way deviant, you know they're pretty bloody mainstream.

Joe (56, divorced-single) referred to the consequences of moving from discreditable to discredited if knowledge of his commercial activities travelled across the boundary and became known in the non-commercial domain: 'It's [knowledge about me paying for sex] all round the office ... [or]... the neighbours might put two and two together, which wouldn't be a great thing, it wouldn't be the end of the world, I wouldn't welcome it.' He further explained that among his friends: 'It would be a bit awkward, I don't think most of them would not speak to me again ... It's not so much *I* think there's a problem with it, I think *society* has a problem with it and cos society has a problem with it, it would reflect on me and that's what I don't want.' These narratives therefore identify *social* consequences in terms how those around would judge them based on differences in line with dominant cultural beliefs of heterosexual norms.

Other imagined consequences concerned relationships with a spouse, as found in Sanders (2008a) and Peng's (2007) work, described in Chapter 2. Jeff (69, married) said his wife would be hurt and he would 'hate to think' about how she would react. He claimed that despite being open-minded himself, he had 'still been moulded and nurtured by society generally and I ... had the feeling I'd done something wrong', suggesting that he feels different from others by choosing to take part in paid-for sex. With these consequences came associated emotions, particularly guilt. The sense of 'doing something wrong', and not being 'particularly proud' of it, was expressed by some participants, especially in relation to their married identity. Huw* (47, married) discussed the 'breakdown in trust with my wife ... deceit and guilt ... I'm using family assets

to pay for my selfish needs.’ Edwin (54, married) also mentioned feelings of guilt: ‘I’ve gone off and done it behind my wife’s back and it’s a big secret from everybody. No one knows that I do it, cos no one would understand why I have those desires, so guilt and shame.’ John (40, married) spoke about being ‘discomforted ethically ... to ... pay for sex ... it has to do with being married in the context of my own particular upbringing ... as a Catholic and it doesn’t sit comfortably with that ... background.’ He went on to state that in other European countries it appears to be a more acceptable part of the culture and ‘there’s something peculiarly British ... about the unacceptability of the [paid-for] encounters.’ Thus, John highlights the social and cultural context in which stigmatisation occurs, implicitly suggesting the power of (British) cultural beliefs constructed through social and political discourses about good and bad sex.

A sense of self-justification was evident when some men revealed the reduction in guilt over time. Jack (56, married) disclosed that in contrast to an element of guilt when he started, he did not think it was there anymore:

I’m more accepting of me taking part ... I don’t feel guilty anymore, I just accept it as part of me, as part of my life ... [due to] ... time ... [and] attitudes to sex and sexuality seemed to have changed over the years ... my own feelings about it, that sex is just sex, and relationships are very different, that while sex is part of them, it’s not the bedrock of a relationship ... friendship is a big part of it.

Jack thus demonstrates the role of time in the process of identification, and the role of his shifting perceptions of relationships and sexuality. These transformations will be returned to in Chapters 6 and 7 in the context of heterosexuality. Despite these negative feelings and consequences in terms of social unacceptability, guilt, or hurt to spouses, these men still choose to take part in paid-for sex and incur consequences as a result. Discussion now turns to how they 'manage' this spoiled identity, especially in relation to the conflicts it generates with other processes of identification.

- Management

Goffman's (1968) passing and covering practices, with their resultant management techniques, as outlined in Chapter 3, help to understand how men manage these multiple identities, and the strategies and processes they utilise in order to carry on taking part in commercial sex, and to protect themselves and those around them from embarrassment, shame and potential exclusion.

Compartmentalisation

I am using compartmentalisation here to refer to the men's internal processes of separating their commercial and non-commercial lives. Via internally 'separating out different forms of sexual and intimate relations' (Sanders, 2008a: 125) the men were able to simultaneously operate in 'two separate worlds ... [making commercial sex] another side of their life ... and they switch off and go and do what they do and snap out of it when they leave the parlour' (Ryan, 48, long-term partner). Thus, once the boundary has been crossed the

men utilise that boundary to protect themselves. Edwin (54, married) discussed how in a commercial meeting he pushes ‘everything to the back of my mind and carry on as normal.’ Jack (56, married) says how he can ‘divorce it from my home, wife, compartmentalise it’. Distance allowed Paul (64, married) to compartmentalise: ‘Overseas you are a long way from home ... away for quite a while ... different sort of atmosphere. It doesn’t impinge, it’s a totally compartmentalised and probably even if found out would have been excused.’

Concealment

Men’s systematic compartmentalisation of front stage and back stage (Goffman, 1959) suggests that, for most of them, keeping their involvement in paid-for sex markets separate from non-commercial lives and people is of primary and fundamental importance. In order to do this, some men go to great lengths to conceal their activities to prevent getting caught and thus manage their multiple identities. Strategies utilised include spatial, temporal and technological mechanisms to fit around normal routines, plus the ‘stories’ or information they choose to tell or not. Spatial methods were split into planning and the actual encounter. Planning, for some men, was done when alone. Bob (50, married) would ‘never make arrangements if my wife’s in the house.’ For Felix* (34, single) planning focused on issues of privacy, restricting the display of the stigma symbols of phone box cards¹⁰⁵, and how he thus modified his behaviour to protect his privacy:

¹⁰⁵ Phone box cards are cards that sex workers leave in public phone booths with contact details on.

Going to a phone box and phoning a card number I found off putting, I felt I was being watched, it was not private enough, it didn't feel right. It was later on I discovered the newspaper ads, now I could phone numbers at leisure from home.

Through separate spaces for separate activities, these men managed their conflicting identities, thus highlighting Goffman's (1968) notion of forbidden, civil and back places.

Sebastian* (29, single) followed a routine of a certain time and day but managed the risk to his identity by visiting girls an hour away and as 'I only see girls working from their own flat ... all someone would see is me entering a block of flats although certain areas ... are well known for escorts flats so could be a bit tricky explaining.' For Brad (52, single), the location of the encounter is fundamental to maintaining discretion: 'I never use parlours, you never know who else will be there.' Distance from where one lives is also a method of maintaining the division between commercial and non-commercial worlds, through restricting the display of the stigma symbol. Harold* (43, married) said, 'I'd dare not meet a girl in 100 mile radius of home.' Ben (61, married) described how 'my work takes me away so ... I can fit it in and it doesn't interfere with my life, or anything else.' Joe (54, divorced-single) does not invite sex workers to his house, as 'I'd be a little concerned about you know, a succession of gorgeous young women coming ... and staying for half an hour then going again ... I think the neighbours might put two and two together.'

Temporal methods of fitting in commercial sex encounters utilised the separation of work and home: either when men were working away, or around work schedules. For Alan (57, widow –dating), being self-employed allowed him to set his ‘own schedules’ and write his ‘own diary’. He goes on to compare himself with men who have a partner and claimed: ‘it’s easy for me cos I live alone ... I don’t have anybody looking into my bank account.’ For Oliver (63, married) however, it was more complicated. Working shifts meant that there were occasions where he had significant amounts of free time, but also other occasions with no gaps. He claimed that ‘If I was desperate enough I could probably think of an excuse to disappear for an hour ... I’m not completely tied down ... if you’re in a situation in your marriage you’ve just got to be careful.’ Oliver, therefore, arranges his free time: ‘quite carefully so that I can create an opportunity ... it’s not that difficult ... I could imagine it’s more difficult for somebody that’s maybe got a partner that’s at home all the time.’ Jeff (69, married), despite having a wife, has free time because her employment means that she works away for three nights a week, thus giving him the freedom to take part in encounters without compromising his identity. Thus these men utilise a variety of techniques to manage the stigma including preventing getting caught, concealing or restricting display of the stigma symbol, managing normal routines and drawing on the distance from others emotional and in proximity to allow them to take part in their stigmatised activity.

As suggested in Chapter 2, the intersectionality of various identities produces different experiences for men who pay for sex. Differences in relationship

status is further emphasised by Tom (64, widow – single) who has no partner: ‘because I live on my own I can invite women into my home freely.’ And in reference to visiting girls himself, he would ‘usually take a day off work and make a day of it.’ He has no problems making arrangements or keeping secrets; in fact for him, the only problem with meetings are the ‘usual practical ones with any meeting, like, you know if the girl’s car breaks down.’

Participants also referred to how other ‘normal’ routines, especially their employment, allowed them ‘time and freedom’ (Martin, 55, married). Or as (Charlie, 63, married) said, it is ‘easy to find the occasional couple of hours out’. Harold* (43, married) described the opportunities offered whilst working away: ‘It only happens in the evenings, apart from the occasional lunch or airport pick-up (always after an evening flight).’ Adrian (54, married) claimed that it is ‘fairly straight forward. I work in the day; I go back ... to the hotel ... ring up the particular establishment to see which women are working ... I go and I stay there a couple of hours and then I go off and have supper.’

Adrian further revealed that, whilst working away keeps it hidden from his wife, he does not go to such lengths to conceal his involvement from work colleagues, highlighting the difference between forbidden, civil and back places (Goffman, 1968). Although, initially, classifying the work context as forbidden, telling colleagues that he would not be ready by the time they were meeting for dinner and saying he would meet them an hour later and have ‘a liaison then’, he did tell them in the end. Whilst not suggesting that disclosure to work colleagues makes this a back place, it is not forbidden and straddles the divide

between civil and back places. He discussed this as less risky in contrast with 'punting at home... cos you have to pop out of work and have to find time ... walk to where the flat is and hope nobody see's you', highlighting home as the forbidden place. Again for Huw* (47, married) arranging encounters was 'never around home life, definitely not'; instead it focused on finding 'windows around your working life (I work out of various offices)' to avoid detection and prevent exclusion that comes with revealing his stigma in a forbidden context. He also claimed that a 'routine might give the game away ... because the meetings are irregular, random and I always have a reason to be where I am, it does not attract attention'. The spatial and temporal opportunities offered to these men thus allow them to both separate and integrate sexual commerce into their lives, in some cases performing different identities within separate spaces.

Secrecy

Other passing techniques concern withholding information, both in their commercial and non-commercial worlds, and for some men it was simply that 'nobody knows'. For Harold* (43, married) this is achieved simply: '[I] just don't discuss it.' Bob (52, married) uses a 'fictitious' email address, in that it is an 'assumed name and [I] never give any personal details away when I use that address'. This limiting of information in commercial sex is further explicitly referred to by Harold* (43, married), who spoke about having an:

incentive not to peek into each other's ID. We exchange pictures of kids, but we don't ask for each other's real names, or places of residence

... I don't want her or the industry to be able to find me and harass me later on. Don't want to create false expectations.

So whilst Goffman (1968) suggests that stigmatised individuals split the world up into groups, those who know everything and those who know nothing, it would appear from my data that this is not the case. Instead the men manage information in both worlds, to prevent others associated with the stigmatised practice from finding them and thus revealing how they know one and other in a forbidden place.

Sebastian* (29, single) described 'trying to cover my tracks', although he does not 'tell lies. [I] Just don't say what I've been up to, well trying not to put foot in mouth and instead not saying much and being stiff.' For Leo* (37, single), '[I] always have a story in case I need one, if I have a hotel booked I will say that I am going to a work thing but nobody has ever asked'. Cover stories to discreetly manage interactions with other stigmatised individuals in public, allowing them both to pass, were also in place for Harold* (42, married): 'A girl can be someone from an ex-project or ex-job.'

Money

In order for sex to be commercial, money must change hands. For some men this is not a problem, especially those who are single. However, for those with partners, money management in order to mask their involvement and restrict the display of the stigma was a necessity, as Charlie (63, married) told me: 'additional sources of income – professional sidelines ... which go into a

separate account ... probably my wife didn't realise quite how much I got from those additional sidelines.' Huw* (47, married) however, described the difficulties as he and his wife do not have separate accounts: 'I have to squirrel away cash. Not drawing too much at a time. Just a little of what is left over each month.' Similarly, Edwin (54, married) 'saves a bit each month [after] the bills, the mortgage, the food and anything else we need ... If I've got a bit of spending money left I put that to one side.' Having separate accounts makes it easier, and for Josh (54, married) being self employed means that he has a business account as well as a joint account and a personal account. Money is therefore 'fed in from various sources'. Tony* (42, married) said that money is an issue for him at the moment as he has returned to studying, demonstrating the intersectionality with other shifting identities. He explained that when he was working, he and his wife both had 'me' money and he spent his on an electrical models hobby. Now, as he is no longer working his 'me' money, is not as substantial: 'I spent mine on electronic models the year before, this year it was on sex.' He manages this by using 'last year's model, but with ongoing maintenance it's very difficult to tell if I am spending or not'. As can be seen, some men go to considerable lengths to conceal their activities economically, by either siphoning off small amounts each month or having access to their own money. Thus they create a separate space for the money that allows them to live out a separate identity.

Coming out

Despite these efforts there were times when processes of 'coming out' occurred. There were differences, however, in that some men were 'caught' out and disclosure was 'forced upon' them. In other cases men actively chose to disclose their involvement, sometimes measuring the risks Peter (47, divorced) described 'the taboos and who do you tell and how much do you tell?' Peter highlighted the difference between forbidden and back places, describing two male friends he tells everything to. Within this context, he is able to use 'covering' (Goffman, 1968), concurrently reducing the obtrusiveness of his stigma and offering the information in a way suggesting that his friends are above such concerns, by 'bargaining' with knowledge that involved knowing his friends' 'little pleasures'. Tony* (42, married) similarly revealed his involvement to 'a woman I used to work with ... indiscretions over drinks at the bar ... nothing to gain, nothing to lose', as she revealed her own secret past to him, again suggesting an exchange of knowledge within the covering processes that helps to reduce his own stigmatised activity. Thus, it appears that certain identities are revealed based on a 'balance and exchange of knowledge' about others', perhaps stigmatised, identities.

Some of the other men choose to reveal their involvement more straightforwardly. Will* (30, single) told 'one of my best friends and she's cool about it and knows why I do it ... I got fed up with pussy footing around the subject so I told her.' Brad (52, single) revealed his involvement to his brother-in-law 'after a little bit too much to drink once ... He said words to the effect

of: "Don't you ever miss getting your leg over?" ... and it came about like that.' He stated that he reacted in the context of how 'a bloke would react with another bloke saying it really. It's no big deal for him really, but I hope my sister never finds out.' Thus he, implies a gender split in terms of 'acceptable' behaviour and again draws attention to forbidden and back places.

Nick (52, single), who said some of his friends knew, by drawing on his single status presents a hierarchy of stigmatised individuals, suggesting others may be subject to stronger consequences than himself:

I'm on my own and I'm not married and I've got no partner so I'm not that bothered ... if people know what I do, a lot of me friends know what I do and they just have a bit of a laugh about it ... I can appreciate some people if ... they're married ... want to be anonymous.

Nick, then described how he got caught, but also how his disclosure affirmed his masculine status, through homosocial bonding, as Chapter 3 explained (Flood, 2008; Messner, 2001). Yet he also drew on the elements of masculinity associated with the fear of not being able to perform, physically and socially, as Chapter 2 also explored, which put his heterosexual masculinity at risk. These characteristics associated with masculinity, for example being heterosexually successful; if not achieved also result in a stigmatised identity. Being labelled as different to those men who are heterosexually successful, based on cultural norms within peer groups, result in status loss and discrimination:

It was funny ... I was thinking "Just imagine if someone saw me", and then it was like later that evening I saw me brother and me brother's girlfriend, and he sort of like says, "Oh, was you going to Bella's today", and I says "Yeah, how do you know?", and he says, "Oh we saw you with you coat on and everything", and anyway it we just had a laugh cos all me friends know. What did seem a bit amusing ... how strange people can be cos ... I used to live [somewhere else] then I got to know some friends through a ... group ... we was talking in the pub and he was saying something about, cos I used to knock about with a friend quite a bit and he was saying, "Oh we thought you were gay or something" ... And when I started talking about massage parlours and there's a place ... Bella's, "Oh you know Bella's, how do you know Bella's?", "Oh I've been there", and all this. And it's as if I've proved that I was masculine and I'd proved that I was heterosexual. "Oh you're heterosexual; you've proved you're heterosexual." So it's like one minute I'm being accused of being homosexual and it's as if I've got to prove I'm heterosexual, you know it's a strange thing sometimes. It's as if society conditions men, you've got to prove that you're heterosexual all the time.

For Nick, amongst others, no disadvantage was attached to their disclosure. In contrast, Felix* (34, single) told one of his friends and afterwards had a negative experience, resulting in disadvantage: 'I once told a mate after a few pints after my first experience, but he would use it later to goad me, so I vowed

never to tell anyone again ... He doesn't know I did it more than once ... but will [mention it] if he remembers.'

For others 'coming out' was in relation to their partner and generally tended to be a much more negative experience, highlighting potential conflicts between multiple identities. This suggests that some identities are more in conflict than others; in this instance, relationship status. John (40, married) first took part in commercial sex whilst working abroad, shortly before returning home and getting married. For the few days after the encounter he felt very guilty and that 'led me into a kind of mind frame where I felt that it was ... necessary for me to 'fess up to this encounter in a phone call to my then girlfriend.' He then stated that his wife was not verbally aggressive, 'she just seemed saddened, upset that I'd chosen to do that'. John did not take part again in commercial sex again for three years and has chosen not to tell his wife again.

However, some participants were 'forced' into telling their wives. Adrian (54, married) contracted a urinary tract infection and went to be tested for sexually transmitted diseases: 'I told my wife I'd been seeing prostitutes and that you need to have a test cos I may have caught something, and, as it so happens, neither of us [had contracted anything].' His wife's reaction was to scream. However, despite her reaction and considering the risks involved: 'If I did ever get caught again that would be the end of the marriage', he enjoys oral sex without a condom. Adrian told me he had come to this decision as: 'it is always considered to be fairly safe, [however], it's not totally safe ... so I have to re-evaluate and say "Am I actually going to do that, oral sex again?"'

As can be seen, getting caught holds significant risks for some participants and for others, whilst the risks do not seem to be that great, their commercial sex lives may not be something they want to be common knowledge. As such, the men go to considerable lengths to manage this identity and conceal their behaviours, managing the leakages between their commercial and non-commercial worlds, defining forbidden, civil and back places. Making sure the front and back stages are kept separate, and separate performances are undertaken in each area, are therefore individual aspects of identity management. The distinctions surrounding 'coming out' are important, showing that for some men commercial sex is by definition dirty or oppressive, and for others it is cheating on a partner or spending shared income, highlighting the contextual nature of identity and the intersectionality of identities. However, inhabiting the stigmatised client identity was not always managed individually, and instead collective management strategies were drawn upon, to minimise the felt aspects of the stigma.

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted that paying for sex is about being a heterosexual man, in terms of what a man should feel like and what is expected of him, and grounds theoretical understandings of identity within this specific context.

Identity as a man, as a client, and as a heterosexual sexual being, is achieved through processes of identification that include both the reflexive self and social interaction, based on notions of similarity and difference. Identity is constructed during performance and requires validation. However, the fluid nature of

identity has been emphasized, in the notion that identity moves across boundaries. This process of boundary crossing is both experiential and emotional; however boundaries need to be maintained through normalisation and collective belonging. The multiple nature of identities has been highlighted, demonstrating how they interact and have consequences, such as status loss or guilt. The management strategies utilised to attempt to preserve the boundaries between commercial and non-commercial worlds have been shown to be permeable, with leakages between commercial and non-commercial worlds, yet the management strategies to prevent this have been explored. The notion of movement and leakages between commercial and non-commercial spheres is elaborated in the following chapter that discusses the relationship experiences of men who pay for sex within the context of inhabiting a heterosexual identity.

Chapter 6 – Transitions, Relationships and Heterosexuality

This chapter continues the analysis of heterosexual male identities, exploring not only men's interactions with general others, but their relationships with *specific* others, namely partners. In doing so, it empirically grounds this thesis in a discussion of male heterosexualities. As noted in Chapters 1 and 2, research about men who pay for sex predominantly explores men's involvement during the actual commercial sex encounter, locating it within the commercial /non-commercial binary. However, new work has sought to challenge this dichotomy and argues that in some instances the commercial is not so dissimilar to the non-commercial but takes place within a 'bounded intimacy' (Bernstein, 2007; Sanders, 2008a, 2008b). This chapter builds on the critique of the division between commercial and non-commercial sex (Agustin, 2007), emphasising the neglected area of men's sexual and relationship experiences *before* involvement in commercial sex. Although the 'bounded' nature of the encounter is attractive for the majority of participants, the boundaries between commercial and non-commercial worlds can become blurred and leakages occur.

Shifting Sex

This chapter concerns the transitions in the interviewees sexual experiences and relationships, from before they were involved in paid-for sex through to, and then throughout, their involvement. Much has been written about changes in the sex industry and wider shifts in sexual landscapes. As Chapters 2 and 3 argued however, work on the sex industry has neglected to ground this in terms of male clients' experiences and biographies. In order to accurately document the

experiences of the men in my study, and understand the fluidity of heterosexuality as both an identity and a way of relating, I draw on Hawkes' (1996) concept of the 'liberalization of heterosexuality'. Hawkes draws attention to four key issues, the uncoupling of sex from marriage, the commercialisation of desire, female challenges to masculine models of sexual pleasure, and the rejection of life time monogamy. Thus the context in which men negotiate heterosexual life will be explored, to demonstrate the meanings of macro level changes in sexual understandings and culture for participants. These data tell us about men appraising the historical shifts that frame their own biographies.

- Society and Sexuality

Hawkes' (1996) liberalization thesis, coupled with Giddens' (1992) notions of the 'pure relationship' and 'plastic sexuality' as discussed in Chapter 3 helps to make sense of the stories men recounted in several ways. The severing of ties between marriage and sex, that Hawkes, amongst others charts, was a theme in terms of how participants thought social attitudes had changed. Tony* (42, married) suggested that 'casual sex seem[s] more accepted'. Many participants agreed that mainstream society has become more tolerant of extra-marital sex: 'people have more casual sex for longer than they did: they start earlier and don't "settle down", initially, into serial unofficial monogamy, till later' (Charlie, 63, married).

Mark (47, married) talked about the easy availability of sex and its disassociation with marriage and procreation, suggesting Giddens' (1992)

concept of 'plastic sexuality', a sexuality free from reproduction, coupled, with as Hawkes (1996) describes, women's challenge to masculine models of desire and their rejection of lifelong monogamy:

It's [sex has] definitely become a lot more casual ... 20 years ago, you'd never seen women on TV saying quite openly, "I'm just out to pick a guy up for a shag and then" ... there's always been more of men saying, "I'm just looking for more of a shag", but nowadays it seems that everybody's admitting [it].

Despite the fact that research into extra marital liaisons suggests that infidelity is widely condemned (Jackson and Scott, 2004), an acknowledgement of its pervasiveness suggests a rejection of lifelong monogamy. John (40, married) highlights this disparity between what people claim is morally acceptable and what they are actually doing, citing contradictions between resources which enable the uncoupling of sex from marriage and reproduction and the censure of those who undertake this:

With chat rooms on the internet, with all kinds of websites specialising in, in different sexual inclinations and preferences ... encounters are easier to ... make happen [but] ... it's curious, I kind of read problem pages ... and you know people writing about they've gone off, and done the dirty on their girlfriend or boyfriend, the majority of the responses that I read, "This is a shocking thing and you shouldn't be going off and doing this". So at the same time there's a kind of a liberal, er flood gate of possibilities, but I think there is at the same time a conservative,

conservatism of ... what is sexually acceptable and what, what is unacceptable within monogamous relationships and I, there's a massive gulf, it seems to me, between what I read in problem pages and what I see maybe happening in the internet.

This divergence between the expansion of sexual possibilities online and an intolerant conservative censoring of anything that deviates from heterosexual norms mirrors political debates about commercial sex. Furthermore, it reflects Jackson and Scott's (1997) rational management and moral conservatism discourses, with the former emphasising an individualistic pursuit of pleasure and the latter the social and moral order, as explained in Chapter 3. This paradox of increased conservatism in the face of significant national and global expansion of the entire spectrum of commercial sex industries, as Chapter 2 described, has been neglected in research on changes in sexual attitudes since the late 1980s. Whilst, of course limited to those men I studied, participants' perceptions of shifting sexual culture are nonetheless telling. Ryan (48, long term partner) suggested that today, 'compared to 70s, society is a lot more open and liberal about sex and relationships'. This increased liberalisation of sexual attitudes was compared with the previous gendered nature of pleasure, thus recognising women's challenge to male models of sexuality and models which neglect of female pleasure. However, as Matt's (58, married) narrative below illustrates, recollections of previous heterosexual experiences were tinged with regret, due to social constrictions placed on sexuality at that time:

I think there was much less openness. It [sex] wasn't something that could be talked about ... [there was] a lot of discussion via innuendo, erm, things were very hidden, secretive and I think there was an attitude at that time that it was something really rather dirty and it was something that had to be put up with ... It was considered something that women in particular had to put up with and that men embarrassingly had to get on with and it would really be rather better if none of us had to bother. I think that attitude is very different now. I think it's accepted now that both men and women can feel physical desires, that both men and women can, er, get physical pleasure out of sex. I think it's accepted now that sex is part of, part of life and is, is something that people expect to be able to enjoy. I think that's good ... I'd much prefer to be a teenager now than when I was.

With this recognition of female pleasure, further changes regarding gender differences were mentioned by participants, who recognised the challenges made by women to a masculine model of sexuality: 'I can remember a pressure to lead, to take the girl through it, a tendency for girls to behave as naively as possible so as not to appear a slag or pushy ... These days it seems girls are more comfortable about taking a lead' (Huw*, 47, married). Further gendered changes were mentioned by Jack, in relation to more couples cohabiting than when he was young and women's greater freedom to leave unsatisfactory relationships. He locates these changes within the gender revolution, emphasising Giddens' (1992) notion of the 'pure relationship', one only stayed in so long as it delivers satisfaction:

Equality ... increased opportunities for, er, women. Er, such that they are less likely to stay in relationships ... they don't find satisfying. I think that now, cos they've got more earning power, er, and they're able to support themselves more, as I say they have options, they have choices. I believe statistically more women end relationships than men.

The fluidity of heterosexuality is thus recognised alongside the active participation of women in making life choices, and leaving partners, coupled with characteristics of late capitalism. These include the rejection of tradition and women's increased entrance into labour markets (Hawkes, 1996). These data thus suggest men's adherence to the liberalisation thesis. The men spoke of sex as 'recreation' rather than 'procreation'. In some cases, they shifted away from models of 'male' sexuality, instead highlighting female pleasure and agency. The men's narratives also demonstrate the fluidity of heterosexual experience especially with a move towards alternative sexual and relationship experiences, detached from the ties of marriage.

These shifts have positive connotations; greater choice, the recognition of female pleasure, and a more egalitarian sexuality. The social and cultural nature of these shifts, which McNair (2002) terms the 'democratization of desire', with increased access to means of sexual expression in parallel with a more pluralistic sexual culture, as explored above, were described within men's stories, with the role of the media emphasised, including some of the negative implications of this. The increase of sex on television led Huw* (47, married) to claim that 'Sex in the media's changed. In general too it's no longer such a

taboo. Victorian values are not as prominent'. Others linked this to an increased openness about sex and a shift in understandings: 'It's [sex] more, more talked about and more discussed about and there're a lot more programmes on TV about it. I think people gradually understand that sex is nothing to be ashamed or hidden away. It has changed for the better' (Edwin, 56, married).

Alan (57, widow-dating) referred to the visibility of naked bodies and the accessibility of porn: 'Now nudity is all over the newsstands and hardcore porn is available over the counter.' However, Charlie (63, married) spoke of a 'media obsession with matters sexual.' The 'media obsession' led Sebastian*, (29, single) to highlight a media emphasis on 'men performing like studs', suggesting a *burden* placed on male expectations of sexual performance and again the power of discourse pertaining to identity construction, mentioned in Chapter 5.

In addition to the demands of the successful performance of male sexuality, as Chapter 5 explored, parallel constraints on female sexuality were also mentioned, indicating uncertainties and anxieties as to whether any progress is simply illusory:

The ladette culture as well that er, women should be able to do you know, what they want, like men have always been able to do ... That women having casual sex is, is just as ok as men having sex ... it's better that it is, people are allowed to be more open to make choices for themselves, rather than them being constrained by societal norms, but at the same time, perhaps societal norms have changed to the extent that,

er, I don't know, perhaps it's gone ... too far in the other direction, that ... Now there's the, instead of being the expectation that women will behave in one way, there's now an expectation in society that they'll behave in another way. So perhaps that freedom of choice that I've spoken about is an illusion, erm ... cos the pressures are there. (Jack, 56, married)

For Hawkes (1996), the liberalization of heterosexuality, and the perceived sexual autonomy gained by women was in fact illusory. This perceived freedom encouraged the commercialization of female sexuality through sexualizing every characteristic of women's existence and prioritized heterosexuality: this is similar to the abolitionist arguments about the commercialisation of female sexuality for men's gain discussed in Chapter 2. The gendered nature of the commercialisation of bodies and female sexuality, coupled with constraints to women's employment, as in Walby's (1989) patriarchal structures, was described by Russell (29, single), especially in relation towards younger women:

It's kind of seems to be kind of like media ... I went onto iPlayer and saw *Page 3 Teens* ... You see all these people who are doing these psychological degrees going "Yes, my dream job is to be a Page 3 girl for The Sun" ... then a couple of seconds later you see "currently doing a psychology degree" and it's just a case of, where did they get the idea of becoming a Page 3 girl and it relates to "my role model's Keeley or Jordan" and it's just a case of ... "Yeh Page 3 must be highly paid".

Other contradictions were highlighted. Nick (52, single) emphasised the mismatch between political debates of increased sexual regulation in some contexts, and an increased sexual tolerance in others:

Generally people have more important things in life to worry about ...
Most people are tolerant of sexuality if it's not forced on them. A brothel will be tolerated if its discreet, street prostitutes/kerb crawlers are an annoyance ... It's when a big deal is made of it for political reasons that people's minds can be brainwashed.

In contrast to the previous narratives, that have indicated a shift, albeit a bounded shift, in sexual attitudes towards a more liberal approach, discussions also revealed men's sense that sex is still a taboo and that there is an intricate relationship between this taboo and sexual regulation: 'Sex in Britain is a taboo, it always will be. I don't really understand it but in my opinion this is where a lot of the problems start. If someone tells you you can't do something, it makes you do it even more' (Will*, 30, single).

This regulation of sexuality and appropriate sexual behaviour co-exists with the expansion of the sex industry. However, here again contradictions were seen in the men's perception of attitudes towards commercial sex. Thus they highlighted safety and social aspects of the process of engaging in commercial sex encounters, including commercial sex as part of touristic and leisure experiences (which Brents and Hausbeck [2007] discuss as evidence for a growth in acceptance of paid-for sex):

Possibly, yeh, it's more acceptable again. What's risky, you go and see a working girl or [have] a slightly drunken fling with a girl you've picked up in a bar or a club, which is the safest option? ... All the girls that I've ever met are very serious about their personal, erm, protection, hygiene and safety. (Oliver, 63, married)

My perception is that, erm, [within] some groups of younger males, it's become more acceptable to go and pay for sex by virtue of, erm, stag weekends abroad which can then perhaps make it easier for those people to rationalise, too, for those people to then come back and pay for sex in the UK. (John, 40, married)

However, John went on to state that: 'In terms of reading articles within The Guardian. My perception is that there is ... a more intense intolerance of men paying for sex amongst certain female journalists that I've read.'

Thus it appears that toleration is contextually bounded and not homogenous. For Mark (47, married), the easier accessibility of casual non-commercial sex has made commercial sex more frowned upon, identifying men who engage in paid-for sex as deviant, paralleling the political rhetoric in Chapter 2:

I think if anything it's possibly hardened ... Now the view is almost, why should people have the paid sex scene cos they can go out to a night club any day of the week and pick up erm pickup, a milf¹⁰⁶, and

¹⁰⁶ Colloquial term meaning 'Mum I'd like to fuck'

have a quick shag and then go home again ... There is the impression that sex is readily available so why are these men going to prostitutes?

The shifting landscape in which the men have been negotiating involvement in heterosexual life and paid-for sex has demonstrated the heterogeneous nature of perceptions regarding changes in sexuality. How heterosexuality is understood is temporally and culturally contingent, and influenced by the wider structures of social life, especially the media. The shifts documented and experienced create a paradoxical situation in which, whilst there appears to be increased tolerance for some aspects of sexual life, in certain contexts, this takes place within a bounded framework of acceptability. In a culture where 'sex is used to sell everything' (Jack, 56, married), and every essence of femininity has been sexualized and commodified, and in which feminist challenges to masculine models of sexuality supposedly offer emancipation, has that much changed in men's actual experiences of heterosexual ways of relating? Are we living in a sexual culture where sex is available easily, or are the tensions between conservatism and liberation more prevalent and ingrained than they may appear? The following section, which describes men's experiences and expectations of heterosexual living will begin to explore how these tensions, contradictions and bounded understandings are experienced and negotiated in daily life, highlighting the social processes through which a heterosexual identity is lived out either by signing up to, resisting or failing to meet hegemonic models. Furthermore, the fact that how men attempt to make sense of historical shifts in sexual attitudes and practices contributes to the ways in which they understand their own (sexual) life histories will be emphasised.

Heterosexuality: Experiences and Expectations

There is a striking absence of empirical and theoretical work on the biographies of men who pay for sex; their heterosexual masculine status is assumed. The following section builds on the recognition of the fluidity of heterosexual life as expressed by Hawkes (1996), Hockey *et al.* (2008) and Richardson (1993) in Chapter 3, and highlights the diverse, complex and transitional nature of the men's experiences of both growing up heterosexually and being a heterosexual grown up. Thus, I explore paying for sex through the lens of being a heterosexual man across the life course in contemporary society. The social and interactional nature of adhering to a heterosexual identity, either via interaction with others, as Chapter 5 explored, or with respect to hegemonic discourse, is emphasised, as is the transitional nature of heterosexual experience.

- Growing up Heterosexual

By exploring the 'intersections of biography and history within society' (Mills, 1970: 7) this section locates the experiences of growing up heterosexually for the men in my study within the context of wider changes in sexual attitudes discussed above.

Thinking about sex

It is becoming increasingly recognised that heterosexuality is involved in the experience of childhood, as well as adolescence, as children live out gendered identities of 'boy' and 'girl' through their interactions and identity work (Renold, 2000, 2006). Despite the increasing separation of sexuality from moral

and religious discourses (Jamieson, 1998), the formation of some participant's sexual identities drew heavily on these notions, often resulting in confusion about sex, as Matt (58, married) described: '[sex was] something exciting, pleasurable, naughty, dirty. I think again a lot of people in my age group grew up to see sex as something exciting but not really very nice.' These contradictions invoke moralistic dichotomies of purity and sin. Moralistic or religious perceptions of sex were common themes among the men when they recounted what they thought of sex during their younger years, emphasising the power of religion:

I came from, er, a very strict Catholic, er, family and, er, I was an altar boy and there was a lot of, for me, fearfulness around, erm ... giving expression to, er, to my male sexuality ... and that was utterly traditional theological trepidation around issues of Heaven and Hell and oh my God this is sinful, and all those kinds of classical ... screwed-up processes. (John, 40, married)

In addition to linking sex to dominant moralistic discourses, there was significant association with sexuality as masculine, as Chapter 3 explored. Heterosexual masculinity is a form of hegemonic masculinity which depicts men as sexually assertive, emotionally detached, and with unlimited sexual desire, implying compulsory heterosexuality, homophobia and misogyny, with 'real' sex being defined by vaginal heterosexual penetration with an active subject and passive object (Allen, 2003; Jackson, 1993; Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2003). Whilst misogyny and homophobia were not explicitly present in

men's accounts of what they thought of sex when younger, heterosexual sex was understood as essential and as a way of defining one's masculinity. Yet, as Oliver (63, married) suggested, it was 'something I think most boys wanted but didn't get or very rarely got'.

All the men's narratives in my sample situated heterosexuality as the hegemonic form and thus constitutive of hegemonic masculinity which the men positioned themselves relative to (Frosh *et al.*, 2002). Growing up 'normal' was perceived to be only achievable via heterosexuality, which was confirmed by one's peers, as Flood (2008) suggest, through taking part in sex. As Bob (50, married) described: 'I grew up as a normal healthy boy, looking at girly mags ... I wanted sex back then, there was peer pressure to lose your virginity.'

The social pressures to conform to hegemonic norms, emphasised the importance of having sex, thereby allowing the men to assert their masculine status to others: their sexual success was demonstrated through access to the limited resource of female sexuality (Baumeister and Vohs, 2004; Flood, 2008). Jack (56, married) drew on a traditional gendered heterosexual requirement to be "better than other men" (Maxwell, 2007: 555): 'It was something that you wanted to experience ... [and] were able to brag about to your friends ... "How far did you get?", sort of thing.' Similarly, Ryan, (48, long-term partner) further highlighted the prevailing social pressure to engage in sex as an identity marker, as opposed to an act of emotion or intimacy: 'I think it was just something you had to do in a hurry, just so you could say you've done it. I

don't think it meant anything in terms of love or you know intimacy ... [it was] something to get done as quickly as possible.'¹⁰⁷

Holland *et al.* (1997) and Allen (2003) argue that this social pressure to conform to gendered norms from peer groups can be resisted, as Chapter 3 explored. Yet as Russell (29, single) found, there may be a cost, in terms of experiencing homophobic attitudes and bullying by a dominant male, if a man reveals his reluctance to take part in sex. Russell's construction of relationships emphasised more than physical aspects, reflecting Allen's (2003) findings of some young men locating their desires in a discourse of intimacy within which mutual disclosure is required. For Russell, they were about: 'someone to get to know ... and if she doesn't want to have sex, that's fine, if she does then, yeah ... If you get into the wrong group they go, "Oh you're gay", and just basically start abuse.' He went on to describe the pressure put on him by peers during university, when chatting with his female neighbour: '[He was a] done it all, been round the world type of bloke and he's just kind of like "Yeh are you going to shag her within a week or do you want me to do it?" ... I just kind of blew him off and went, "Whatever" .' Russell's narrative draws attention to the consequences of resisting homosocial bonding (cf, Messner, 2001).

Russell's narrative demonstrates resistance to hegemonic ideals through the rejection of a sexually predatory identity; however the desire to experience sex, and the central position it seemed to occupy in some men's thoughts, could create difficulties if it proved unobtainable. Harold* (43, married) simply

¹⁰⁷ I am not suggesting that social pressures are absent for girls. The data gathered in this project focused on men's experiences and their narratives did not mention the pressures for their female counter parts, so I can make no claims about the social pressures that girls faced.

described this as: 'I WANTED it, but couldn't get it, for years. Did dream of it from approx 16 to 26.' As well as the social pressures discussed above, this centrality of sex to men's thoughts was also understood in essentialist models of sexuality: the male sex 'drive', male sexuality as a powerful, uncontrollable force, and permissive attitudes (Allen, 2003; Hollway, 1984; Weeks, 2003). Joe (56, divorced- single) recollected that he was a 'screaming mass of hormones wanting ... a lot of ... sex', and for Martin (55, married) sex was as an 'urgent need ... imperative', something that made him a 'prisoner'. Martin told me he experienced sex as something with 'no restraint ... an extremely powerful force ... it was something that was so powerful and potentially in control'. Therefore, these narratives suggest that for some men, male sexuality as a drive and a force was their lived experience. Other participants drew on essentialist understandings, when they compared sex with other essential bodily functions, as Mooney-Somers and Ussher (2008) found. Josh (54, married) said that it was a 'huge physical urge. You know when you're really ravenous for food'. Essentialist, masculinist versions of sex, disconnected from emotionality, will be returned to later.

For some men, however, sex was not particularly significant during their younger years. Whilst this may not simply be classed as resistance to hegemonic norms, there was still a failure to adhere to the hegemonic norm, whether deliberate or as a by product of other social and cultural factors.

Familial constraints existed for Edwin (54, married): 'I lived in a very strict house and nothing like that was allowed to be talked about. Er, so it sort of, it didn't mean nothing to me.' Other interests distracted Jeff (69, married): 'I

didn't think anything about it. If it wasn't driven by steam and pulled coaches I wasn't interested.' For these men, there was no 'biological force' pulling them uncontrollably towards sexual engagement. Instead, social and cultural factors shaped emotions, desires and experiences surrounding sexuality during their early years (Weeks, 2003). These data suggest the *social* nature of how sex is understood, including the pressure to conform to the hegemonic masculinity that is emphasised by the peer group.

Learning about sex

Learning about sex includes, but goes beyond, sex education, and can involve both formal and informal sources of knowledge, experimentation and practice, and theory and information (Holland *et al.*, 1998). Accounts of learning about sex from the men in my study, parallel other findings explored in Chapter 3 and revealed a startling lack of information on which to build their understandings. Institutions such as the family and school were both criticised heavily and some participants were offered no sex education by either institution. Alan (57, widow –dating) said: 'I was certainly never taught it by my parents. I was certainly never taught it by school'. A limited sexual education had led to negative understandings of sex, in terms of denial or embarrassment, intertwined with moralistic discourse of sex only in marriage. John (40, married) recounted the difficult experience of sex education by his mother: 'My mother gave me a ... short booklet. I remember one embarrassing day not that we have a discussion, she just gave me the booklet to read'. However, the sex education within his Catholic school was equally inadequate:

A biology lesson ... life models in the black and white video ... he [the teacher] switched off the, the, er, projector and said that he wouldn't continue showing the film cos of these naked bodies. So my experience of, of, er, in education into sexuality was an experience of ... deniability in, in a sense of, of the ... of, of the physical processes involved in, in sex and sex was only legitimated in, in, er, in a married context.

Reluctance to offer education that covers other aspects of sexuality aside from purely biological or reproductive elements is misleading, but furthermore, continues to reinforce the sexual double standard of active male and passive female sexual roles, which will be returned to below (Holland *et al.*, 1998). The data suggests that these inadequate or biological teachings locate male sexual desire in essentialist discourses of uncontrollable force, or only in the reproductive sphere. So, education of this type fails to acknowledge the social and cultural aspects of relationships and sexuality such as emotion, intimacy and friendship, helping to entrench understandings of sexuality as something men *do* to women.

Holland *et al.*, suggest that there is an assumption that young men do not learn about sex; instead they "somehow 'just know' about it" (1998: 59). However, this assumption appears to be inaccurate; these perceived failures of institutional sex education generated some particularly strong emotions for Joe (56, divorced-single), who, when asked about how he learnt about sex, replied:

Very randomly and not very well for quite a long time ... I was brought up as a Catholic ... in the 60s and we did have the classic Irish priest

you know who you know if you mentioned panties to him he'd kind of whip you. Which was, I mean, yeh, sure I laugh about it but it was an absolute fuck up you know. We had, I was very fortunate in the school I went to, it was a, we had some good new staff, straight out of teacher training college who were not that different from us. They were grown up in the 60s and a bit hippie. I remember the biology teacher just kind of going, "For fucks sake boys, don't, you know nothing about this do you?" ... In some ways, I'm extremely angry about this.

However, formal sex education, either from home or school, tended to be secondary to more informal channels of education. It is suggested that gendered identities are formed in school via interaction with one's peers and friendship circles (Renold, 2006). My data did, indeed, refer to identity construction and sex education through interactions with others in the school environment: 'I learnt an awful lot of it from gossip and chatter amongst my peers in the classroom and in the playground ... and innuendo' (Matt, 58, married).

In addition, for some men, there was no one source of education. Instead, multiple resources of peers and experimentation, both alone and with girls, were drawn on to generate their sexual knowledge and understandings:

[In the] 1950s ... I learnt about sex, erm, in practical terms by accidentally discovering how to masturbate ... and then other kids were talking about it in school and then you gradually start putting two and two together and you start realising what it's about so. I suppose it's about masturbation and tales. (Tom, 64, widow-single)

As Flood (2008) illustrates, the social bonds between young heterosexual men can have a powerful influence on their sexual relationships with women. For the men in this study, these homosocial bonds mapped onto their identity as described above and their experiences of sex education, thereby reinforcing hegemonic heterosexual masculine ideals. Huw* (47, married) described a process of homosocial bonding through not only the sharing of pornography but the actual generation of their own pornographic material, which had an element of humour lacking in formal sexual education processes: 'A group of us at school used to write humorous porn for each other, that's when it was fun.'

Informal interactions with one's peers were supplemented by the actual *doing* of sex in some instances. Alan (57, widow-dating) was a teenager in the 1960s, a period of sexual liberation, and his embodied experience of learning was via: 'trial and error ... through touching and heavy petting, the usual way.... we weren't very good at it ... [but] try[ed] to get in as much practise as possible.' In contrast, Will* (30, single) had much more limited experiences of learning through doing, and it was not until his mid to late 20s that he found out about sex:

I learnt when I was in my twenties from a lass I went out with, then from the escorts. I was a virgin until I was 20 and the 1st sexual encounter well was a bit of a flop i.e. I couldn't get it up. I didn't even masturbate until after that I didn't know howI suppose I learnt some of it before I started punting in my middle 20's but I really learnt from the escorts over the last 2 years.

Some men, despite the interactional nature of learning about sex, taught themselves, so fulfilling the stereotype that men just 'know what to do'. Despite being from different generations, which spanned the supposed liberalisation of sex and the explosion of sex in culture, for both Ben and Russell, teaching themselves was essential as their sex education and knowledge was poor and limited:

My first sexual experience ... was a bit of a disaster ... I didn't know what went where. I just knew absolutely nothing. Erm, so I, I realised things weren't as they were supposed to be. Went back and had a look through the encyclopaedias. To, to see what I could find out. That was basically my sex education. (Ben, 61, married)

It was just a case of, when I was 16, 17, going "Yeah, no one's told me how to put on a condom but if I get into the situation where I need to put one on, I'm going to be absolutely stuffed." So it was just a case of, bought a packet on condoms, went home, locked myself in the bathroom cos there was no one else there and kind of taught myself how to put it on properly, and it was like, "Yeah, now I know how to do it". It's a case of no one's kind of told you the basic[s] ... They have these really stupid consent forms, if you didn't, if your parents didn't sign the consent form for you to be in the sex education you got kicked out. (Russell, 29, single)

Doing sex

Hollway (1984, 1989) describes three main heterosexual discourses; a male drive discourse, a have / hold discourse, and a permissive discourse.. The men's recollection of their experiences of doing sex during their younger years drew on masculine constructions of sexuality that focused on male rather than female pleasure, as in the male drive discourse. As Ben (61, married) told me:

[I was] not in the slightest bit aware or interested in my, er, partner, er, girlfriend at the time, er, needs and, er, feelings. It, it never occurred to me. I was very, very selfish, erm. And once I was satisfied ... That was the end of it, as far as I was concerned, cos I knew no better.

Lack of emotional engagement and a rejection of relationships was also revealed by Huw* (47, married), who claimed he was both sexually and emotionally selfish and that his focus 'wasn't about building relationships ... [or] having a girlfriend, that was like a millstone around your neck - I was into music and rugby and didn't want another person's agenda or needs to worry about'. This lack of emotional engagement, in parallel with a focus on the physical aspects of sex, resembled hegemonic ideals of male sexuality as detached from emotion, and implied Giddens' (1992) notion of plastic sexuality, free from reproduction: 'My first girlfriend ... we had a very kind of intense shallow physical relationship ... and [then I] met another girl ... we had a really intense physical relationship, but again there wasn't much of an emotional engagement' (Joe, 56, divorced-single).

In addition to the lack of emotional engagement, cited as part of dominant masculine discourses, the explicit gendered nature of power within sexual relations was emphasised by Huw* (47, married), who said: 'I recall sex was about the boy getting his end away and the girl allowing it, the girl was never in a dominant position.' This confirms hegemonic heterosexual ideals in which men are active and women passive and where sex is understood as for men's pleasure. Thus these men grew up firmly locating their experience of doing sex within a 'male in the head' model of sexuality, in which heterosexuality is not "masculinity-and-femininity in opposition: it is masculinity" (Holland *et al.*, 1998: 11). According to work on young people and heterosexuality by Holland *et al.* (1998) and Allen (2003), at an early age this ascription to a normative heterosexuality serves to subordinate young women and reinforce appropriate performance of a masculine identity through heterosexuality¹⁰⁸.

Not all men fitted the 'male-in-the-head model', however some men failed to achieve dominant stereotypes of the virile sexual male. Despite stereotypes of men as sexually aggressive, uncertainty and drawing on stereotypes that women do not want sex also limited men's sexual experiences: 'I kept thinking "Well women don't want to do sex", erm, and that, so we kind of lay in bed kind of rubbing each other against each other and it never actually turned into sex, I now, I keep thinking, maybe I should have done' (Adrian, 54, married).

¹⁰⁸ I cannot tell if the women that the men in my study choose to have sexual relations with resisted the men's adherence to male models of sexuality, and this is something I did not ask about. I am *assuming* from the men's narratives that for those who did engage in sexual relations when they were younger, there was no (or minimal) resistance or agency expressed by the women, or if agency was expressed it was unproblematic. However, the men's claims that women rejected or denied these men access to the female body during later years of heterosexual life suggests some agency and a shift in power relations, as will be returned to later.

Not doing sex

Adrian's quote above demonstrates that whilst sexuality was a site of difficulty, there was some experience with women, however limited and frustrating this may have been. However, some men had considerable difficulty actually obtaining any access to another person, as a result of institutional constraints during educational and family life, for example. Charlie's (63, married) access to female partners was restricted because he attended an all-boys school, and his 'up-tight middle class parents' resulted in a constrained social life at home. Having no female friends at secondary school meant for John (40, married) that sex was 'unimaginable ... an experience of non-experience of the other sex'.

Jason (52, single) has Aspergers syndrome - which he described as 'rotten' - and it led to him being 'very withdrawn', and not knowing 'what to do ... socially'. Failing to meet hegemonic ideals, he felt he was 'just totally hopeless'. Jason was not alone in his fear of not being able to relate appropriately when compared with others. Not knowing 'how to talk to women' (Adrian, 54, married), or other social difficulties, such as being shy and unable to 'unable to approach a[n unknown] girl in a bar' (Gareth, 37, single), were common themes amongst the men in my study, demonstrating the vulnerabilities that young men face in terms of betrayal, fear of rejection and lack of confidence. Being shy was Sebastian's* (29, single) experience, but it also linked to his lack of confidence about his 'looks/body [which] ... didn't help'. Russell (29, single) described self esteem issues over betrayal. After being bullied at school by people who he thought were his 'closest friends', he was left with a feeling of

‘ “Am I going to get betrayed?” ... That nagging feeling of betrayal where you build up confidences’. Despite popular beliefs that men are confident and are sexually aggressive, these data suggest that for some men heterosexuality is difficult, and that the ‘male-in-the-head’ model is not an experience available to all men. Emotions, which are generally absent within heteronormative masculine discourse, are seen in these narratives: feelings of uncertainty, betrayal, lack of confidence and inadequacy suggest that heterosexuality can evoke significantly difficult emotions for men, as some authors have documented (Maxwell, 2007; Seidler, 1992).

- Grown up heterosexuality

Despite perceived shifts in sexual attitudes over time, my data suggest that growing up as a heterosexual male, regardless of the generation to which one belongs, could be fraught with anxieties, difficulties and contradictory experiences. The discussion now considers men’s grown up heterosexual lives, up to their involvement in commercial sex, documenting transitions in their non-commercial relationships and experiences that facilitated their decision to engage in paid- for sex. The work reviewed in Chapter 3 provided a base for me to offer an analytic framework of how men experience and practice heterosexuality across the life course suggesting notions of heterosexuality as involving a ‘bargain’, being a ‘burden’ and located in the mundane. I now apply this framework to men’s grown up heterosexual lives and to start with I wish to demonstrate that some men I interviewed have had successful relationships, thus challenging pathologizing discourses of men who pay for sex

Many of my respondents had heterosexual relationships outside commercial sex as part of their adult lives. However, experiences were varied and diverse. Joe (56, divorced – single) described his married relationship as successful and fulfilling:

Emotionally fulfilling I suppose in that I wanted the relationship with someone who would care about me ... With my ex bless her; we just fell for each other. She's had some you know difficult things in her life as I've had in mine and she was prepared to, to look after me with all my faults and all my peculiarities and all my erm, my needs, just as I was prepared to look after her peculiarities and needs and we both really enjoyed being together. We made each other laugh all the time. We'd fuck each other until we couldn't stand up anymore, erm, and you know we had babies and the whole deal, really it was everything you want from a relationship, except it was all compressed into 5 years ... When I come home and I'm feeling really, really knackered and dragging my sorry arse along the floor she will kind of sit me down and give me a cuddle and make me feel that life's worth living. That was there, that was definitely there and I don't lie awake at night crying myself to sleep cos I don't have it anymore, cos it's you know ... That relationship, the fact that it gave me pretty much everything I wanted from a relationship, so I'm very fortunate that I had that in my life and having had that in my life I don't need it again, so I'm kind of free of that great search, struggle for this great thing that people are looking for.

What Joe described can be seen as an example of what Giddens (1992) calls a 'pure relationship', one entered into mutually and continued until satisfaction was no longer gained. Jamieson's (1998) notion of a disclosing intimacy based around equality and mutuality, where knowing one and other form the basis of the relationship and elements of trust, is also evidenced in Joe's experience. He does not describe what went wrong eventually, just that it was compressed into five years instead of across the lifetime. Thus, for some of the married men, like Joe, their relationships had started out well.

However, other narratives of early fulfilling relationships were present. For some men in my study, hegemonic heterosexuality, whilst not discarded, was transformed, for example, by taking part in non-monogamous relationships such as swinging or open types of relationships. Several men had consensually non-monogamous marriages: Tom (64, widow-single) had open relationships and he told me his wife was free to do the same, but she did not. He however, had two or three lovers and one relationship that lasted eight years. Both Jack (56, married) and Jeff (69, married) took part in swinging and for Jack it 'heightened the relationship with my wife'. Jeff claimed that his wife 'enjoyed it, she found it exciting to be watched'. However, for both men swinging ended on a particularly negative note, suggesting limits to the extent of consensual non-monogamy in marriage. Jeff broke the 'rule' that neither party would go with someone the other did not like the look of or 'didn't want to get involved with them for one reason or another'. He broke this rule twice, which broke 'her trust and that's why we packed it up'. However, he was always 'wanting to break it [the rule].' Yet for Jack, his wife got 'too emotionally involved with

the other guy and his wife got upset about it.' Jack claimed that this was reciprocated, but not to the same extent.

Although entering what could be described as a 'pure relationship', some married participants still felt their relationships were limited from the start, even if acceptable up to a point. For Huw* (43, married), his marital sex life had always been 'vanilla', which led to it becoming 'samey ... [to a] formula'. Like Jeff, who wanted to push the boundaries of acceptability, Huw disclosed that early on boundaries had been established which disappointed him, but which he did not think would be critical. He went on to say: 'I also thought she'd come around to some of them later. I guess I loved her and the sex was not that important.' For Huw the *bargain* of heterosexual experience was an emotional one: he loved his wife and therefore could sacrifice aspects of their sexual experience together. A perceived reluctance of their wives to expand the sexual activities they took part in was expressed by several participants, yet Adam (56, married), in contrast to Huw, discussed the shifting of boundaries within the context of active male and passive female sexual models. His wife 'wouldn't talk about [sex] ... [but] once we were in the bedroom ... if I tried things then she sort of looked pleasantly surprised and then sort of got on with it and sort of participated in and enjoyed it.' Oliver (63, married) described his wife as always 'passive' and he that was always the one to initiate sex which he found confusing, with Oliver asking himself ' "Is she's being passive because she doesn't want me to be interested?" Or ... "cos she's just passive cos she doesn't do anything to encourage?" ' He detailed how this had been acceptable when they were younger as, 'I was able to perform basically the way I wanted to

without any encouragement ... but ... you're thinking "Why isn't my partner touching me affectionately? Why isn't she seducing me physically?".' Thus, the bargain Oliver had entered into, his acceptance of fixed passive and active roles, became problematic and a site for confusion over time.

The shifts in long-term relationships discussed in Chapter 3 reveal a focus on women's reduced interest, reduced sex drives, and ageing bodies. These findings parallel the difficulties the men in my sample revealed within their marital relationships. Thus the boundaries which had been negotiated became less acceptable:

She's four years older than me and when she reached 60 she decided that sex was no longer an option in the marriage. It wasn't up for discussion ... It just ceased. It wasn't that, all that frequent anyway, erm. Which tends to happen I suppose with a lot of marriages, [after] 30 odd years. Erm, but there was some sexual, erm, element to the marriage. But it just stopped. She just decided that she, she just felt too old. Nothing I could say or do would, was going to change her mind.

(Ben, 61, married)

These data suggest that boundaries exist in heterosexual relationships, in terms of sexual frequency and practices, but that during early years of relationships were less significant. However, over time, either as the boundaries shifted to become less accommodating of what the men required, or the boundaries remained the same, the bargain that the men had entered into was no longer acceptable, so creating tensions and confusion within relationships.

The notion of heterosexuality as a burden was expressed by some men, with respect to the difficulties they faced in accessing both sex and relationships, which continued into their adulthood. Demonstrating a shift in understandings, and thus the experience and practice of heterosexuality, the burden of heterosexuality was expressed in terms of its relevance to both men and women. The embodied issues Brad (52, single) described in terms of his weight, meant his overweight identity constructed him as different to ideal models of attractiveness. Consequently his embodied masculine identity was a burden that excluded him from full heterosexual life:

Brad: I've never been shy, it's just that. As I say I've always been overweight ... nobody wants to jump into bed with a fatty at the end of the day, I don't care what anybody says, it's true.

NH: And did you, erm, did you find that you'd tried to instigate relationships or?

Brad: Oh yeah, yeah ... They were all sort of very nice about it, and sort of thing, and you get this kind of "Thanks, but no thanks. I like you as a friend", and when you've heard that for the 500th time you know you sort of give up.

There were further masculine burdens associated with men taking an active role in dating etiquette, and the possibility of rejection was a burden. Nick (52, single) described a fear in terms of approaching women: 'I'm too scared to ask them out ... I'm just afraid that ... she'll say "I'm busy" or "I've already got

someone”, and I suppose that I’ll feel rejected ... It’s a self esteem issue I suppose.’

Nick and Brad both diverge from masculine ideals, either in terms of embodied characteristics or active heterosexual roles. Interestingly, the burden of heterosexuality was expressed in distinct opposition to how the men had previously understood sex and sexuality, in that elements of mutual pleasure and emotion were threaded through their narratives. For Will* (30, single), his negative experiences revolved around the fact that he felt that ‘the one thing I never really did successfully was pleasure a woman’, thus highlighting the ‘burdensome’ growth of an expectation of mutual sexual pleasure within heterosexual relationships. Jason (51, single) similarly described a shift away from heterosexual relationships based on male desire, towards an honest and emotionally reciprocated relationship: ‘Oh yeah, I’ve never really had a relationship. I say, she picked me up [but] ... She wouldn’t be totally honest about what she was up to and things like this whereas I told her ... I wanted [her], to show some affection towards me but she didn’t.’ These data thus confirm others’ findings, as suggested in Chapter 3, that men have fears over performance and technique, emotional involvement, rejection, uncertainty, and concerns over meeting embodied norms (Korobov, 2010; Maxwell, 2007; Seidler, 1992).

The strains of modern life, as Chapter 3 described were also articulated in the narratives in, other ways, such as the burden of parenthood, which is stereotypically seen as a female issue. Matt (58, married) contrasted his own

and his wife's respective desire for sex after the birth of their children, thereby placing masculine and feminine sexuality in opposition: 'My wife's interest in the physical side of the relationship deteriorated quite sharply, erm, mine, my interest in, er, in, in the physical relationship didn't.' However, Josh (54, married) constructed the same transition differently. Rather than drawing on gendered differences, he referred to the practical constraints that parenting bring within a relationship: 'After the kids arrive you can't so much anyway cos they're around, so you get out of the habit of talking about it.' As well as a reduction in the frequency and nature of sexual relations, for Huw, the arrival of children opened up an emotional distance between him and his partner, as he felt his wife's priorities shifted towards the children, with a resultant shift in the practices within their relationship. Whilst it appears to be a burden for her, in Huw's view, in that the children are her priority, it also strained their heterosexual experience, because both emotional and intimate interactions have been sacrificed:

We used to have more oral sex until we got married and then it seemed to disappear ... Sex became procreation rather than recreation and we had our first son 10 months after the wedding day. The emotional distance opened up from that point on ... We have two young sons ... and they take priority for her ... We worked hard at keeping some contact for cuddles and intimacy, this has declined though. [We used to] set aside time for "us", almost like scheduling intimate time. [Now] we have both stopped making time for each other. (Huw*, 47, married)

The mundane aspects of marriage and sexual relationships were common themes. For Adrian (54, married) sex was 'not adventurous sex, it's just marital'. The passage of time was seen as a contributing factor for Jack (56, married), who had experienced 35 years of marriage, 'the relationship gets a bit, what's the word, ordinary'. However, he went on to recognise that this may in fact be the norm: 'I suppose like a lot of married couples, you know it's down, it's got to, once a week on a Sunday morning type'. This is similar to the decline in sexual relations over time suggested by Duncombe and Marsden's (1996) work on heterosexual couples in long term marriage, described in Chapter 3.

As Hockey *et al.* (2008) indicate, heterosexuality is about more than just sex. Other mundane aspects of marital life revealed by the men in my sample, not specifically relating to sex, were 'arguments over the washing up', 'working 9 to 5 vacuuming the carpet, scrubbing the toilet', 'changing the baby's dirty nappy.' Peter (47, divorced) argued that monogamous life partnerships that met traditional standards were perhaps unachievable:

Relationships generally are pretty mundane day to day and, erm, the peaks of niceness and things going, going well. Erm, I think often times people go into a relationship expecting one person to be all things to them at all times and I think that's an unrealistic expectation ... To expect one person to meet all your emotional, financial, sexual erm, practical physical needs, it's a hell of a big ask ... forever.

These elements of heterosexual experience and practice do not exist in isolation. Harold* (43, married) brings them together: as a bargain, a burden and part of the mundane. As he explained, time constraints and busy lives left only the period from Friday evening to Sunday evening to spend with his wife and family, highlighting the burden heterosexuality placed on women in terms of mundane child care and employment: 'We are too busy to be too close. She is totally off sex. Just doesn't fancy it. Not her fault, I presume ... That is the sad part: I married this passionate woman, to see her turn into a rather busy, boring working-mother.' Harold went on to describe his *burden* the *bargaining* elements and his attempts to alleviate the *mundane* that he undertakes in a bid to be intimate with his wife:

She lets me hold her in my arms, if I get excited, I'm allowed to wank. If I'm lucky, she kisses me while I get excited. If not, she will apologize ... we have discussed. She knows I want more intimacy, cuddles, even just passionate kisses would be nice. But she is visibly not into that anymore ... Hell, I've tried. Travelled, wined and dined her around Europe without the kids, even to the US, but no avail ... She gets relaxed when away from work, but the old passion never returns ... that is the real disappointment. I can't revive it.

Choosing Commercial Sex

The changes men experience in long-term heterosexual relationships over time or problematic access to women's bodies, meant at some point, that all my participants decided to think about 'choosing' commercial sex as an option.

Again, their experiences, motivations and choices are diverse and contradictory, suggesting that, like heterosexuality itself, men who pay for sex are not a unified, fixed or monolithic group. Motivations, along with the sex acts purchased, are perhaps one of the most researched areas of men's involvement in paid-for sex, yet they are frequently explained in simplistic descriptive typologies (see McKeganey and Barnard, 1993; Monto, 2000; Weitzer, 2005a). The social, cultural and historical elements of choosing to pay for sex are frequently sidelined, which means that the decision to pay for sex is presented in a vacuum, neglecting the wider social context in which paying for sex is sought.¹⁰⁹

Having explored paid-for sex as an aspect of men's lives which compensates for something 'lacking' (Sanders, 2008a), I now consider motivational factors in terms of male heterosexual experience, as part of their non-commercial lives, within the framework suggested above, in terms of a bargain, a burden, and located in the mundane. However I wish to add a further concept: rationality. As suggested in Chapter 3, it is through a 'rational management' discourse (Jackson and Scott, 1997), that emphasises the individual pursuit of pleasure, that men are able to make the decision to pay for sex and attempt to control their engagement.

¹⁰⁹ For an exception, and interrogation of the 'push' and 'pull' motivational factors, outlined in Chapter 3, see Sanders (2008a).

- Motivations

The overlying motivational issues for the men I interviewed mirrored other studies, (McKeganey and Barnard; 1996, Monto, 2000; Sanders, 2008a). The men in my sample mentioned a variety of reasons for paying for sex: dissatisfaction in a current relationship, lack of success with conventional dating mechanisms, wanting something more, and commercial sex as a straightforward, safe, simple or honest route to fill a gap in their life. The following discussion of motivations, which focus on a 'lack' in men's lives, provides an analysis that reflects heterosexual theorising, firmly locating paying for sex within the context of men's gendered relations with women, informing us about heterosexual masculine experience in contemporary society and not offering simplistic descriptive typologies as much previous work has done.

Access to women's sexuality either as wives, long-term partners or through casual sex was frequently expressed in terms of a bargain, as mentioned above. This involved compromise and negotiation and can be located within Pateman's (1988) notions of the 'sexual contract' and 'male sex-right', coupled with negotiations around domestic labour. In contradiction to some narratives of young heterosexual experiences, in which access to female bodies was taken for granted, Huw* (47, married) described a different situation within his marital relations, highlighting the transitional element of heterosexual experience and relationships and the compromise on both parts: 'Whilst the sex was vanilla I was prepared to live with it; compromise. But when the sex was withdrawn I felt I had to find an outlet.' However, following Pateman's (1988) notion that

marriage is a socially acceptable way for men to access women's bodies, when Huw's wife refused to compromise in granting access to her body, he refused to compromise and instead sought sex elsewhere, through commercial sex. Thus for Pateman, as Chapter 2 argued, commercial sex is central to patriarchal capitalism and "part of the exercise of the law of male sex-right, one of the ways in which men are ensured access to women's bodies" (1988: 94).

This bargain in access to women's bodies was also expressed, in terms of negotiations around domestic labour, as Mark (47, married) revealed:

[I] love my wife even though things are shit and so we keep working ... It takes time and commitment and maintaining intimacy takes time and commitment and effort ... to be intimate with my wife I have to mow the lawn ... that's an example, but that's the reality .

This suggests that some men take part in domestic duties in order to be granted access to their wife's bodies. Thus, in marriage, sexuality is commodified, not only through the exchange of financial support and stability, as feminists have previously argued, but via the exchange of domestic duties. The men place a price on the cost of their own domestic labour, whilst simultaneously placing a price on their wife's sexual labour; consequently there is a bargain and negotiation in non-commercial sex¹¹⁰.

¹¹⁰ It could be argued that this commercialisation of sexuality is similar to that of commercial sex, simply the method of currency is different, but this analysis is beyond the scope of the arguments in this thesis. This also raises questions if the women are selling or putting a price in anything? I have no grounds to make any claims towards this as I have no data from the women themselves.

The heterosexual 'burden' is perhaps best understood as the way in which the heterosexual 'bargain' is understood and experienced. Elements of negotiation around access to women's bodies filter through the men's narratives, resembling discourses of male entitlement and male sex 'drive' (Hollway, 1984; Mooney-Somers and Ussher, 2008). John (40, married) revealed dissatisfaction about his access to 'fulfilling sex' within his marriage, going on to state that he would like a relationship where: '[I] didn't feel that I had to apologise for having a demanding cock, really ... It kind of feels that way in that in the context of my marriage.' The apologetic element of his feelings about the sexual relationship he has with his wife suggests that, for him, sexuality is understood within an essentialist discourse, as something that he cannot control, yet there appears to be an element of restraint in his narrative due to his desire to apologise. These parallel yet contradictory experiences suggest the burden that John felt regarding living out his sexuality within his marriage. Similarly Oliver (63, married) told me that:

If I would try to have sex ... Probably about six times last year.... one time, I was told, "You're obsessed by sex", and I thought, "hang on a minute", well not really. I'm just trying to be a husband and do my thing and have a bit of fun a bit of relaxation and I feel as if I'm being rejected.

The emotional fallout from feeling the need to apologise, or feeling rejected, demonstrates the burden of heterosexuality for some men.

For others who were not married, conventional dating avenues were unsuccessful, as Brad recounted: 'A friend of mine, I just confided in him and told him I was still a virgin at 32. So he said, "You're joking" and I said "No!" so he said, "We've got to do something about this", and he did, he advised me to go and find someone' (Brad, 52, single). Brad's desire to 'confess', coupled with his friend's reaction that they needed to 'do something about this' suggests that Brad's being a virgin did not accord with hegemonic ideals of when sex should happen, and implies the burden of heterosexuality in Brad's experience. Contrary to Flood's (2008) finding, in which young men who did not achieve hegemonic ideals could be vilified, his friend was neither aggressive, nor sought to bully him. However, parallel to Flood's suggestion he did seek to integrate him into the world of heterosexual experience.¹¹¹

Hegemonic ideals stipulate that male sexual experience is exciting, risky and open to experimentation, as Chapter 1 suggested. For some men, there was recognition that their sex life had not been particularly successful and was now mundane. Charlie (63, married) felt that his 'sex life hadn't been a great success,' which left him feeling 'sexually un-self confident'. Consequently, by rejecting the mundane sexual experience within his marriage he sought to explore 'bits of me that hadn't got explored or been, been very active for quite a while.' Adrian (54, married) understands monogamous heterosexual discourse as mundane; one only has one sexual partner coupled with unadventurous sex.

¹¹¹ It is acknowledged that Brad's experience may be more complex than the analysis above suggests. His account could be interpreted as his male friend 'helping' him, but this still is based around an assumption that men should be having sex. However, I think, although I have no evidence of this – if it were two women having the conversation, the solution would not be to pay for sex.

This left him feeling that he had not fully experienced being a sexual male, similar to some of the feelings in the narratives in Chapter 5 and above:

I'd been monogamous all my life and I'd never slept with any other woman at all and I suppose that I wanted to see what it was like sleeping with someone else ... Although we had a good sex life, it wasn't an adventurous sex life, erm, so I thought "Let's see what it's like with another woman, let's see if I'm missing any particular aspect of a sex life?"

As Chapter 3 described, rationality and masculinity are regarded as synonymous, with the rational male thought process associated with hegemonic masculinity separating men from emotional femininity (Jackson and Scott, 1997; Ross-Smith and Kornberger, 2004). By taking a 'dispassionate' stance (Williams, 2001) towards their non-commercial situations and objectively analysing their options, free from feelings, the men were able to come to a 'rational' solution. A rational management discourse, in which the focus is on an individualistic pursuit of pleasure (Jackson and Scott, 1997) was explicit within the narratives of the men in my sample. The following analysis shows how a sense of lack was addressed within men's rational thought process, which posited an opposition between: money and emotion. Rationally, money offers a logical way to replace missing elements of a relationship, and pursue pleasure, and this type of commoditised exchange is a method of protecting other personal relationships, thus rationally controlling the emotional aspects

that the men associated with sex¹¹². The rational management discourse was made possible by what McNair (2002) calls the 'democratisation of desire', an increased accessibility of finding out about sexual commerce, (due to the industry's expansion explained in Chapter 2), and the men's choosing to take part through the liberalization of heterosexuality (Hawkes, 1996), which has entailed an increase in the commodification of sexuality and desire.

Men's economic advantage over women is well documented, especially within the context of sustaining women's oppression (Walby, 1984). Despite suggestions that women are sexually (and emotionally) unsatisfied within heterosexual relationships (Carpenter *et al.*, 2009), paying for sex is an activity that is predominantly undertaken by men (both heterosexual and homosexual). What was evident in the stories that I was told, despite the moralistic discourse that separates money and sex and situates them in the opposing public / private binary, was a rational process by which men filled gaps within their life and which centred on their economic resources. Gareth (37, single) indicated that starting his own business reduced his social life and opportunity to meet prospective partners, as he was 'working for myself and by myself'; however, he went on to tell me that he thought, 'If I can't meet anyone like that I might as well pay for it and just fill the gap in my life in that way'. When, conventional methods of access to potential partners were constrained they could be replaced using advantaged economic resources.

¹¹² I am aware that this could be interpreted two ways, as I have with the men rationally approaching their situation. Alternative, it could also be interpreted that the men are rationalising their behaviour afterwards. I have no way of telling which interpretation is correct, so as with all analysis this is only my interpretation of the data from conducting the interviews and working with all the transcripts.

Economic ability, in conjunction with a logical approach to what had been, led Alan (57, widow-dating) to seek commercial sex:

She [wife] went and died on me. Which was somewhat ... unexpected. And I'd got friends. I'd got a social life but I certainly wasn't looking for a relationship ... But I, very seriously missed the physical side of things. Erm, physical contact more than the sex particularly. Erm, and being a logical sort of guy this seemed to me, I could afford it, it seemed to me the easiest way of replacing that one bit that wasn't there.

Application of a logical, financially resourced, approach, allowed some men in my sample to construct paying for sex as 'simple', compared to the emotional complexities of non-commercial relationships. As Charlie (63, married) explained: 'I'd got rather stupidly involved with a young colleague ... I was complaining to a woman friend of mine. I was getting in a tangle about it all and she said, "Oh for heaven's sake if that's all you want, go out and buy it" So I thought, "Yes, why not?" ' It can be seen, therefore, that for some of the men in my sample, their economic capacity was coupled with a rational management discourse in which money was associated with simplicity and logic; the private sphere of sex was linked with the public sphere of money and the two were thought to be compatible, offering a straightforward solution. However, in parallel with challenging the public private dichotomy by mixing money and sex, men rationalized their decision via the clarification of payment, thereby seeking to control emotions and protect other private relationships whilst indulging in additional sexual encounters.

As Mooney-Somers and Ussher (2008) argue, married men faced with relationship challenges pertaining to sex do not see breaking the relationship as a viable option. The married men's narratives in my sample were clearly threaded with the notion that either they did not want to leave their wives or that commercial sex was preferable over other types of sexual encounters. As Bob (50, married) explained: 'Commercial sex protects other personal relationships. [I've] been offered affairs but I've turned them down.' Thus Bernstein's (2007) bounded intimacy, in which men have access to uncomplicated sexual encounters in conjunction with long term domestic relationships, as Chapter 2 described, is made possible through a process of rationality that enables commercial sex to exist side by side with non-commercial relationships, and not in opposition to them:

In real terms we've been married 23 years. I love her more now than I did then, despite all this suicide attempts and all the other issues ... People often don't believe them when, "I saw a prostitute to try and save my relationship, to try and keep my relationship going"... It's trying to find a safety valve, an outlet for, erm, things that aren't being catered for at the moment. My wife's ill, what do I do? (Mark, 47, married)

I'm not interested in having other relationships ... But I do still enjoy varied sexual experience ... Emotionally I'm definitely satisfied with what I've got ... [which] gives me all the love I need, erm, so I, I'm not looking for love elsewhere. (Martin, 55, married)

These narratives suggest a dichotomy between commercial and non-commercial. The non-commercial is associated with emotion especially love. Whilst the men do not state they want 'emotionless' sex in commercial sex, here they suggest that the emotions are different in commercial and non-commercial experiences. This difference in emotional expectations of commercial and non-commercial, however, for some men became a *paradox* within commercial sex engagement, as I return to later.

Commercial Heterosexuality

In order to offer a more sophisticated sociological account of men's involvement in paid-for sex, this section documents the experiences of the men who took part in my study to show the fluid and transitory nature of their involvement with both sex workers and the wider sex industry. Despite the fact that the initial attraction to commercial sex was that it could provide what was unavailable non-commercially without threatening non-commercial relationships, suggesting a dichotomy between the commercial and non-commercial, my data show that commercial expectations are high, and rife with contradictions, with men wanting both typically commercial *and* non-commercial characteristics during the encounters. Thus elements of non-commercial experience are inherent in commercial encounters. In some cases, despite the perception that the commercial and non-commercial are in opposition, they can sit side by side as Bernstein (2007) shows. I also go further to suggest that in some cases they mirror each other, the boundaries between the two potentially blurring.

As previously described, non-commercial sexual experiences are varied and the motivations for entrance into paid-for sex are diverse. The attraction to commercial sex and men's basic expectations will now be explored in order to establish further why they made this choice. This section argues that the attraction to commercial sex is in opposition to what is available non-commercially in that they escape the bargain, the burden and the mundane by drawing on a rational management discourse. The clarification of payment and the bounded nature of the commercial encounter assist in alleviating some of these issues.

The attraction to commercial sex as heterosexual male experience is understood and experienced, for some, via the removal of the need to enter into a bargain with one's sexual partner. As John (40, married) explained: 'There's, there's no need to, for me to negotiate, er, a possible sexual encounter it's obvious ... I'm going there for some kind of sexual experience.' Joe (56, divorced-single) emphasised the simplicity, and the ability to have sex when *he* wishes:

With non-commercial sex ... the bargain to obtain it is much more complicated and it comes back to that simplicity of paying for the sure thing ... There's no guarantee that when I want sex she will want sex. And which means that I may end up feeling frustrated... and if she says, "Oh, I've got a headache, I've got to get up early you know for whatever". Well you know, that's not what I wanted, I wanted something more ... Of course, you kind of go, ok, "Well fine". Now if your level of emotional attachment to that woman is strong then,

“That’s fine darling, you go to sleep, I don’t mind”. Although, those tensions build up inevitably.

One of the burdens of sexuality, i.e. that one is dependent on someone else, is removed in commercial sex:

You feel like you’re going to pay for it later because, erm, you’re in a relationship with somebody ... the sexual side of it can be manipulative sometimes. I’ve certainly experienced that in marriage. But, erm, being sexual with a, a partner can come with strings attached, conditions attached. Erm, so it’s a much simpler transaction and you both know why you’re there and you both enjoy yourselves ... For most of my non-paid sex life I’ve been with women who’ve wanted less sex than I have. So it’s felt like they’ve been doing me a favour, or doing it to please me. Erm, I think that’s what I mean really ... It’s about being in the hands of somebody else that, that my, you know. That my sex life and my sexuality and my ability to be sexual is dependent upon somebody else.

(Tom, 64, widow-dating)

Commercial sex removes further burdens of sexual communication in non-commercial relations, in that sex and negotiations around sex can be embarrassing and articulating desires can be difficult, as Seidler (1992) suggests. In commercial sex this difficulty is removed as Gareth, (37, single) explained:

I feel I can basically talk about anything or say anything. It's odd that you've met someone for the first time that day and you've opened up so much, things you wouldn't say to your friends. Then again most of my friends are blokes and they wouldn't want to talk about personal things anyway ... it's very erm, they're good at what they do, erm, putting people at ease, but I did find it quite cool that it's, they're so easy to talk to about anything ... I've never talked about sex to a girl.

This ability to be more open about sexual preferences was often expressed in conjunction with a desire to experiment sexually in a safe environment:

Commercial is more exciting, I feel I can open up more to a stranger. I would find it difficult being kinky with a girlfriend I think ... they may not like it or think I am odd. A working girl is used to it and doesn't make judgements and if she did well you would never see her again so it doesn't matter ... I am quite submissive, but would not want to show that to a girlfriend. They might take the piss. (Felix*, 34, single)

In addition, men found that concerns regarding performance and pleasure were eased, along with anxieties related to being judged about their desires. Pressure regarding performance issues, for some men, was absent from commercial sex, as Leo* (37, single) explained:

Leo: Yes, I get worried about sleeping with a new girlfriend, I doubt if I could perform to be honest, with a working girl that doesn't happen as it doesn't matter if you can't perform so there's no pressure, however I

never have a problem with a working girl (sexual wise)

NH: is it just the pressure or is there anything else that you think might stop you from performing?

Leo: its knowing that I'm expected to pleasure the girl and she is there out of choice, out of wanting to be with me and not because I'm paying her. and probably wondering why she is there at all?

This lack of pressure about performance was also linked to focusing on one's own pleasure. As Alan (57, widow-dating) described, 'The great joy of a working girl is that you don't have to worry about pleasing her. You've already pleased her, by sticking 150 quid in her wallet. If she does enjoy it that's great! But you don't, you're not expected to make her enjoy it.' He went on to say, 'You don't have to feel guilty if you don't make her come. Cos the chances are you won't ... And I found that quite a relief.' Here he demonstrates the heterosexual burden of ensuring female sexual pleasure and the guilt experienced at being unable to satisfy his partner, shifting the idea of her pleasure from sexual satisfaction to monetary gain for the women, paralleling feminist ideas that women sexually service men for economic support in non-commercial spheres.

Commercial sex was also seen to exist in distinct opposition to what was available in a non-commercial context, a movement away from the routine, ordinary, and familiar often resulting in a more exciting or adventurous experience. As Huw* (47, married) said: 'my wife offers limited vanilla sex, I

need more than that, so I have found a girl who understands what I like, she enjoys much the same, so I see her when I can to satisfy my needs.' Allan (57, widow, dating) further exemplified this: 'it's [commercial sex] with women who'll do things that girlfriends and partners won't.'

Men's learned capacity for, or orientation towards, drawing upon the rational management discourse, can lead to a form of cost benefit analysis, as described by Russell (29, single). Through rationalisation, the straightforwardness of commercial sex is linked to economic issues. Casual sex, for example was seen in financial terms by Russell below, who would prefer to spend the same amount of money obtaining both guaranteed sex and conversation:

You have one night stands but then ... If you go out, I spend about 40 quid on taxi there and back, maybe about 100 quid on drinks and if I multiply that by 2 weeks, so that's 280 quid. So, 280 quid and I'm not kind of guaranteed to have found someone who could kind of generate a relationship with and I could not get like a one night stand like most people sometimes go out to get. So just like weighing that up against having a kind of professional coming into your hotel, you're spending the same amount of money but you're guaranteed to kind of have sex with some escorts, or if you kind of just to kind of, just to go out with or as arm candy if you want to go to a restaurant, the, you're guaranteed to kind of have that look and decent conversation cos they've probably been screened if they're from an agency.

The guaranteed aspect of commercial sex, is also linked to the straightforwardness, as expressed by Joe (56, divorced, single): 'Easy availability ... You can see the pictures, yes she looks great, no I don't fancy her. There's the phone number. Phone up, make an appointment, go.' He also expressed it as a clearer, simpler and more honest way to take part in sex:

I mean, I'm 56 years old. I'm not unattractive, I think. I'm not going to go to a club and pull, let's face it. So what am I going to do when I want to have sex? If I were to go out and find, to be quite honest I don't find 50, 60 year old women that attractive any more, not that I ever did, so ... If I phone this woman, if I pay her this money, I know that I will have sex with her. It's not like a maybe if I take her out for dinner and spend a week or 2 chatting her up, which isn't my thing anyway. I feel, in a sense I feel that is more, erm, sleazy than just going, "Look love if I give you 100 quid will you suck my cock you know?" Erm, it's just much more honest, it's much more straightforward. "I don't want to get married and have your babies", you know. "I don't want to settle down and make a home with you, I just want to fuck. So if I give you some money, can we fuck?" "Yes that's fine", and you know after we've fucked I'll say, "Bye thank you very much" and I might never see you again, er, it's that. It's that easy availability is something I want some of the time and I don't want to be tied for you know years to somebody, just so if I'm lucky I can get to fuck ... That's the attraction the fact that I can just go, "Hello ... I'll be round at 7.30, I want to do x, y and z", and she'll go, "Fine, that'll cost you x pounds".

Rational processes change the unobtainable to the obtainable, via payment, providing access to attractive women who would not be obtainable in non-commercial contexts regardless of economic resources. Thus through economic capacity the mundane can be transcended and the extraordinary realised:

In terms of my earning a relatively small amount of cash. I can, erm, have the most amazing times with some absolutely gorgeous women.

(Adam, 56, married)

I like attractive females, er, and it's, and for me it's a way of going to be with a young attractive female ... For me anyway it's just like a dream, you know, it's like, especially at my age you know, it's something that shouldn't really happen ... me going to bed with a gorgeous female.

(Nick, 52, single)

The attraction to commercial sex is that it removes the anxieties and difficulties associated with non-commercial sex. Analysing this attraction in terms of heterosexual identity and practice confirms that the hegemonic ideals of masculinity are not met by some men. In fact, there are significant difficulties in obtaining access to sex and women's bodies, plus a fear of being judged in terms of what is appropriate and inappropriate sexual conduct. This is not to say that these men are in a disadvantaged position. Implicit within their narratives was the notion of access to viable pleasure that would not normally be available: self-focused pleasure, attractive women and otherwise unavailable sexual acts, whether due to lack of a partner, a partner's refusal, or embarrassment around expressing sexual desires. The men's narratives are

similar to the '*certain truths*' about male sexuality which Mooney-Somers and Ussher (2008) outline: male entitlement and women's role as to satisfy men, the male sex drive, sex as a bodily experience, and male sexuality as in need of control (Hollway, 1984; Mooney-Somers and Ussher, 2008).

Paradoxical payment?

The men I interviewed take part in and are attracted to commercial sex predominantly in contrast to what is available to them non-commercial heterosexual experience, as described above. However, despite these men feeling that they have overcome the conventional difficulties of non-commercial heterosexual experience, in challenging the stigmatising boundary between commercial and non-commercial, it quickly becomes apparent that the commercial and non-commercial spheres are not that dissimilar. There is still a bargain, there is still a burden, and the mundane – ordinary, familiar and routine - aspects of heterosexual life are often actually requirements for successful commercial encounters.

The bargain of commercial sex was an economic one. Yet despite the commercial nature of the encounter, and the protection that this offers, the men did not want to be reminded of this fact, (as Sanders (2008a) also found). Consequently, negative experiences were correlated with a lack of a social interaction and explicit economic awareness:

The girl was very disinterested. Made me feel like a cash machine handing out £50 notes. (Sebastian*, 29, single)

Some of them just want to get it over with ... They can't hide the fact that they just want to get it over with and get your money that's all.... where the prostitute is obviously not enjoying it or she scowls at you. (Jason, 51, single.)

The burden concerns levels of reciprocity and the illusory nature of the commercial sex relationship. As Chapter 2 described, Frank (1998), amongst others argues men taking part in sexual commerce are buying into an illusion, and some men in my study said they were buying into an illusion that the women are enjoying the encounter. These men expressed a desire for some element of reciprocity, a 'two-way thing' (Ben, 61, married), or at least an illusion that the women were enjoying themselves, even though, as Jack said, this may seem contradictory:

Sometimes it appears ... that the woman's just going through the motions and in that case I don't go back ... What I like is women that don't make it seem like it's a commodity, that makes it seem that it is natural. Yes I am paying for it, but they seem to get an element out of, something out of it as well. I know that sounds stupid, but... (Jack, 56, married.)

As Sanders (2008a) suggests, and as was explored in Chapter 2, there is a spectrum of reciprocity, and the 'authentic-fake' delusion of mutuality was common. Some men were very aware that the women were 'acting', both during the physical aspects and also the social aspects of the encounter. As John (40, married) explained: 'that in some ways I sense that maybe she enjoys my

company, ah, I, I really recognise that I may well be deluded, er, er, about that, but I would like to like to intuit that experience.’ This desire for reciprocity can be felt as a burden, in that as Jack suggests he is not satisfied if the sex worker appears not to have experienced any enjoyment or pleasure, and that John has to manage his feelings about the experience to ensure that his delusions are contained. Thus, aspects of non-commercial relationships – or non-commercial relationships as imagined – can be felt to be missing in commercial sex, just as commercial sex can seem to offer that which heterosexuality encompasses, in for example, the ‘pure relationship’, yet in practice may lack.

The social expectations of commercial sex encounters are now well recognised, as Chapter 2 explored, and these include the emotional labour of the sex worker (see Laver and Dolnick, 2000; Sanders, 2008a, 2008b). Despite the ordinariness of non-commercial life, company, conversation and friendliness, key elements of daily living, repeated as part of the routine, were prominent themes when men discussed commercial sex, as John (40, married) explained:

[I] enjoyed her company, I enjoyed talking with her, I enjoyed what she looked like, I enjoyed what she smelled like, you know I enjoyed being with her ... The social encounter part ... the sheer enjoyment of somebody’s company for that period of space of time.

As Martin (55, married) said, ‘Good sex workers simply have a gift for establishing that kind of, er ... Friendly contact at once, so the getting to know you is got through straight away and you feel you do know each other’. Thus the commercial can be an accelerated version of mundane aspects of

interactions in everyday life. This inclusion of the mundane involved everyday practices such as eating and drinking:

I've been with one for three hours or something ... When it's an independent one, it's very much the whole thing. It could be a meal, it could be drinking ... along with the sex and the sex is just part of it. There's conversation as well. It's [like being with] a friend, erm, somebody to talk to. (Adrian, 54, married)

For some participants this conversation and company went further and they required emotional engagement, a type of engagement based on premises of intimacy and knowledge and understanding of one another. Despite becoming involved in commercial sex as a rational choice to contain their emotions, and pursuing individual pleasure, paradoxically, emotional engagement was seen as necessary, as Mark (47, married) described: 'I want there to be an emotional part with the girl definitely. That's sort of, where if I see a girl where there's no emotional part at all, I see her once.' Images of men in control of their emotions were rejected by my participants, as Lupton (1993) suggests, when in private men are able to 'let go':

With good Escorts, I literally fall in love (at least for 55 or 115 min), but serious, I sometimes have visions of how they would be good partners, good mothers. crying: don't quite know, but some dates are very intense. resulting in some very exciting moments together ...visions of things we could do together, romantic walks (done, no sex, just handholding) meals (done) and endless cuddles on a bed. but also: long

conversations in person or on MSN. worse visions: imagine having a child together. starting again. (the complications are unimaginable) but some ladies seem like Great potential partners (Harold*, 43, married)

Men's expectations of commercial sex encounters are thus far removed from established stereotypes of what is offered during brisk encounters on street corners. Following the shifts in the market towards a more 'leisure' based industry, providing a complete experience (Brents and Hausbeck, 2007), participants in this study seemed to require an encounter that entailed significant emotional labour on the part of the sex worker, mirroring findings in other studies described in Chapter 2 (Bernstein 2007; Hart, 1998; Lever and Dolnick, 2000; Sanders, 2008a, 2008b). At a surface level, friendliness and conversation were seen as essential, moving through to a complete experience mirroring non-commercial encounters, with strong emotions attached. These experiences and expectations, and the ways in which the sex industry accommodates them, are at odds with some feminist accounts discussed in Chapter 2 (Barry, 1995; Farley, 2004; Jeffreys 1997; Raymond, 2005), and other representations of sex work as simply men paying for 'access to women's bodies'.

It appears that what attracts clients to commercial sex is what is not available in non-commercial contexts. However, many requirements of the encounter necessitate a parallel experience to non-commercial encounters: presenting the 'paradox of payment'. The women may be providing a service, but the men do

not want to be reminded of this, something that requires skilled workers to provide either emotional engagement or the illusion of reciprocity.

Becoming and Being a 'regular'

For the remainder of this chapter I wish to further develop the notions of heterosexual experience as mundane and rational. First I argue that by becoming a regular, or repeatedly visiting the same sex worker, men come to desire aspects of the 'mundane' experience of heterosexuality, locating this in a discourse of relationality, friendship and intimacy. Yet the commercial aspect of paid-for sex sets this apart from non-commercial mundane experiences. Secondly, I suggest that through their transition into more 'regular' commercial sex encounters, the commercial and non-commercial worlds of these men blur. It is no longer simply that the experiences parallel one and other; the commercial *becomes* the non-commercial experience, emphasising the "interactive relationship between the mundane and extreme" (Robinson, 2008: 129). By transgressing the boundaries of the everyday, suspending monotony, banality, routine and boredom in favour of the carnivalesque, exotic and exciting characteristics of sexual commerce, mundane elements and practices of relating somehow seep between these spheres. The dangers, as men experience them, of the mundane elements of relating in terms of emotional involvement seeping into the exotic, and the difficulties of controlling unruly emotions, then lead me into my final chapter on issues of control and power.

The way men take part in the sex industry can vary in terms of location, cost, frequency and market (see Sanders, 2008a). The men in this study had mostly

been involved in visiting the same sex worker more than once. In fact every participant except one (who had only visited one sex worker once), had seen the same sex worker on more than one occasion. It could be argued that this does not make all the men 'regulars'. However the reasons for returning to a sex worker, whether it was simply for two, three or many occasions spanning several decades, were similar: the ordinary aspects of the commercial sex encounter, in particular the social elements; friendship; intimacy; and particular practices.

The notion of friendship is a useful lens through which to view the narratives of the men in my sample: elements of sharing activities, talking, support and reciprocity (Allan, 2003; Spencer and Pahl and Spencer, 2003; Walker, 1994) were common. Jason (51, single), for example, described friendliness and reciprocity: with repeat visits allowing better relationships to develop (cf. Sanders, 2008a). For him, these visits increased his ability to relate to the women, and to experience feelings of compatibility which allowed him to relax, challenges for him in non-commercial spheres due to his Aspergers syndrome. His account therefore highlighted repetition in social interaction, something present in daily life and taken for granted by most, yet here an essential element of sexual commerce:

If you find one that'll actually smile at you and erm, that makes it look like she's having a good time ... You know I've met one or two that I've been to several times ... You can actually get together and relate to them better... And other ones'll actually go out of their way to make you feel

a bit better. And when I had that depression I met one and she, she, well she's got a daughter who's got Aspergers syndrome. So she helped me and, erm, quite often I went to her and we just had a bit of a cuddle and she'd just jack me off. That was enough ... One of, two of them, it's hard to describe, you just fit together ... You get somebody who's actually compatible with you, you know what to expect and you can really relax into it.

This is not to say that the extraordinary appearance of some sex workers and the carnivalesque nature of commercial sex, were unimportant. However, these were sought in parallel with the ordinariness of conversation and company, as reasons for returning. As Gareth (37, single) explained: ' [it is about being] good looking ... intelligent ... [able to] hold a conversation ... To me it's just as much about the sex as it is about the conversation and the company.'

The social aspects of the commercial sex encounter have been emphasised throughout this thesis. As Pahl and Spencer (2003) argue, there is a range of friend-like relationships; the above narratives suggest a more 'neighbourly' type of friend-like relation, where contact is limited. However, for some men these regular visits allowed the development of friendship, something both implicitly and explicitly stated by the men. Matt (58, married) recognised that getting too involved can be dangerous, but nevertheless developed what he experienced as friendships with the women he saw, in terms of emotional involvement and support:

My personality is that I do get emotionally involved with people anyway, with people that I get close to and I do get emotionally involved, with the people that I see here. I'm conscious that, of the fact that, it is a commercial relationship and, and I'm conscious of the fact that if you took the money side out of it, I probably wouldn't be sleeping with these people. But, erm, I feel an emotional closeness to them, if they're in trouble I try to help them. If I was in trouble they are the kind of people that I would kind of go to and ask for some understanding and sympathy or emotional support. Er, I think of them as very close friends ... emotional friends, people that I can go to for support, people that I can give support to.

Ben, with one regular sex worker he visits, described the relationship as 'friends to a degree'. He said, 'We had lunch together the other day. I know where she lives, I sent her a text and said I'm in the area do you fancy lunch. I mean we met for lunch, had a chat, went our own ways ... so in that instance I don't see her in a sexual light.' Ben thus described joint activities such as eating together as markers of friendship, as both Hart (1998) and Sanders (2008a) suggest. He also knew where the sex worker he regularly visited lived, in contrast to some client / sex worker relationships where the sex worker presents an illusionary persona during sexual commerce. This, suggests elements of trust in addition to shared activities, as discussed below.

Charlie (63, married) further described this aspect of knowledge about the other party, describing relationships that were similar to a non-commercial

friendship: 'One or two I've known for a while. In two cases, we keep up with family news, and so part of the relationship is not that different from that with an old friend.' Harold* (43, married) described the element of trust, and despite saying that, 'I don't need to know her real name or address', went on to say that, 'With the top-5, I think I know who they are, and with some, I have enough trust to stay friends for years, I hope.' In addition to their 'personality, friendliness, politeness, a "giving" attitude ... and honesty, they express their feelings'.

These narratives thus highlight the elements of friendship that are present within commercial sex encounters: trust, support, knowledge, joint activities and emotional engagement, elements of the mundane that are nonetheless experienced within sexual commerce. Despite these experiences, for some men the bounded nature of the client / sex worker relationship was acknowledged. Tom (62, widow) recognised the *bounded* nature of the 'friendship': 'I treat them as friends when I'm with them but I wouldn't presume that I could ring one of them up if I was in trouble or something. So they're not friends in that sense. Erm, but what we have is a kind of friendship.' Thus some men see the relationships as a 'friendship of kind'; implying similarities and differences between commercial and non-commercial contexts (see Plumridge *et al.*, 1997a).

Elements of intimacy, as explored in Chapter 2, were also threaded throughout the narratives, demonstrating the leakages between commercial and non-

commercial worlds in terms of knowledge and practices. As Matt (58, married) summarized:

When I go to see this lady, we get on very well, I know a lot about her, lots of details of her family, both her husband and children and her parents. She knows quite a lot of details about mine, we will discuss the kind of things that's happened to us over the past few weeks, what occurred, whether something has been good or gone wrong, talking about everyday lives, not their commercial sex business. We'll have a drink, we'll have a chat.

Men who visited the same woman were thus able to establish relationships which had mundane aspects as Jack (56, married) explained: 'It's getting to know them and as a result the feeling more comfortable with them, feeling less nervous, being able to talk to them, generally about life and the universe and all that about families and day to day stuff.' He went on to describe the relationship with a woman he has visited several times recently, for between an hour and two hours, highlighting the coupling of the mundane and the carnivalesque in commercial sex, intertwined with elements of intimacy:

It's been more opportunity to talk as well as the sex, to talk about things in general, life, what my life's like at the moment. What her life's been like at the moment, er, her relationships with her partner and so on. The problems I've been having with an investment that we've got. Just as well as having what I feel was good sex ... Which she appeared to enjoy as well. Erm, and there is kissing and fondling and there was sort of

well foreplay, and, erm, and the sex felt genuine in some way. But there was an element of her, enjoying what she was doing ... When I went I felt anticipation, anticipation at seeing her again, erm, anticipation at what I hoped would happen ... I [was] excited about, the idea that we'd be having sex, but also that we'd chat and cuddle and talk.

The opportunity to talk, not just about mundane things like the weather, but personal things like family or problems was a feature of many men's accounts, as was the familiarity, a detailed shared knowledge about one another.

The development of relationships between client and sex worker involved more than just interaction. Rather, the practicalities and activities undertaken were dominant themes within the narratives. Settling down with one or more sex worker was a common practice. Similarities were drawn between this process of settling down and non-commercial experiences, as Huw* (47, married) described: 'I have punted with 10 working girls so far, but only one has become a repeat, or a regular. It's a close comparison to playing the field then settling down with a girlfriend.' Further similarities were drawn with non-commercial experiences, in the fact that it was experienced like a 'date' and understood as a 'normal intimate relationship' (Ben, 61, married). Josh (56, married) explained his encounters with his regular as, 'like a little secret affair, date sort of thing ... [in which] ... One of us will buy in some nibbles to eat, we'll make it an occasion'. By making the encounter an 'occasion', he rejects the mundane rhythms of everyday life in favour of a special event, yet one which resembles the specialness of a non-commercial 'date'. However, in describing his

awareness of the emotional aspects of having a regular, he also expressed the paradoxical need for normality, including emotions and love:

It is lovely ... now it feels just like a normal, once I've handed the money over, it feels quite loving. I can't divorce sex from emotion, that's my, I don't know if problem or not ... The lady I see is, she came into it quite late in life and she's on a sexual adventure in a way and to earn money and in a way I'm doing the same thing really. ... I'm learning about meself and women. I know a lot more about how to please a woman than I've ever done with me wife, put it that way. So she's a good teacher. So it's you know ... from a practical point of view, it's great fun ... But there's all the messy emotions tied up in it that you've got to be aware of and keep under control.

Ben (61, married) explained that being a regular allowed a 'rapport' to develop, and by including practices of non-commercial relationships, the extraordinary was transformed into the ordinary:

There is a sort of a pattern, a progression. The more we get to know about one and other, then the more comfortable we feel and the more likely we, the more enjoyable it becomes ... I want a complete experience ... Normally the ladies come to my hotel. We sit and have a chat, we go and have a meal, we have a nice bottle of wine. More chat, sometimes we go out on the town. Er, just like a regular date ... than just a sexual encounter.

The familiarity of being a regular provides an opportunity for understanding

each other's sexual needs, giving scope for sexual exploration, experimentation and boundary pushing:

I have found a girl who understands what I like, she enjoys much the same ... sex does get better the more you know and understand someone, one night stands are limited experiences, a my mistress¹¹³ knows what I want and I like to give her what she wants too. (Huw*,47, married)

The benefits of being a regular and knowing each other's likes and dislikes are highlighted by Ben (61, married) who says this made it 'a lot better. Much, a much smoother relationship.' He further elaborated:

[A] downside to the commercial sex thing is when you meet somebody for the first time or somebody new ... I find it difficult to, to explain in graphic terms what, what I want from the meeting. You know things like that, it's. But, but with the ones, the ladies that I see on a regular basis, we both know what each other likes and dislikes, dos and don'ts and it, it just makes the whole experience, er, much better cos you're not constantly asking yourself, "I wonder if she likes this?", "I wonder if she likes that?" "Wonder if she'll do this if I ask her?"

However, Ben said that with familiarity, the pleasurable feelings of anticipation are reduced; the 'build up', is 'not so much anymore'. He explained thus:

'Maybe it's familiarity because, because I know them very, very well, you

¹¹³ This is what he calls the sex worker he visits regularly, even though it is a commercial sex encounter.

know so, er, the sort of wondering what are they going to look like, what they're going to be wearing ... It doesn't sort of cross my mind as often as it used to.' Thus paralleling findings pertaining to long-term relationships in which familiarity can reduce sexual anticipation, as Chapter 3 explained. Once again, then, there is a transformation from the extraordinary to the ordinary within commercial sex, in a way that parallels non-commercial experiences.

Returning to the *paradox of payment* however, the commercialisation of the relationship with a sex worker, is what appears to set it apart from the mundane. Even though the men require elements of the mundane in order to have a successful encounter – for example, intimacy and friendship - it is the commodification of sexuality that *allows* them to incorporate the mundane into the exotic. Thus the guarantee of compatibility, and having a good time as a regular, is seen by some of the men to make sound economic sense:

I'm not one to sort of tom cat around. ... I'm a lot happier just seeing three, er, cos basically I feel safe and I know I'm going to get some good times with them, erm, rather than this kind of incompatible sort of date cos it's not cheap is it? ... The concern that I have is seeing someone that I've not seen before, is if we're not compatible, we don't click and, er, it's not an inconsiderable amount of money. Erm, I'm not one to go on [to a] parlour and pay 50 quid for a parlour sort of thing. If I have a date, it'll be at least a 3 or 4 hour dinner date and then back to the hotel. And also, there's no one round this area, so I have to book a hotel for the night, so it all adds up. (Gareth, 37, single)

Ryan (48, long-term partner) also explained his preference for returning to the same sex worker, in terms of reducing the possible cost, having had previous experiences of being 'ripped off'. Thus his data highlight further the commodification of the encounter:

I was going to say a reliable brand you know you can trust, I didn't mean to phrase it quite that way, but it is, once you've had an experience with someone and you know you like them and you know they're not going to rip you off in anyway and you know you've found them quite attractive anyway, you will go back, or I've gone back. Erm, you know the quality can vary and some people can be a bit odd and whatever, and that's what drives me back.

Conventional dating dictates that one is limited to one partner. However, as stated, part of the attraction of commercial sex markets is the availability of varied and multiple partners. Some men combined the benefits of being a regular client with access to multiple partners by being involved with several sex workers regularly. This is in opposition to non-commercial sex, where monogamy and exclusiveness are typically standard and required. This visiting of several women, all for their separate qualities, allowed men to fulfil all their desires regarding what they were attracted to, thus transgressing heterosexual norms, but with elements of ordinary heterosexual experience. Tom (64, widow-single) summarized his reasons for visiting different women regularly:

I visit them for their uniqueness really ... First girl that I saw, erm, even though she doesn't offer full sex, she's just full of fun and has a

tremendous personality. Erm, and different women have a different to their own sexuality and, erm, how they get turned on. And, erm, how they are as sexual beings it's, it's really good to experience different sexualities if you like, different ways of expressing yourself sexually.

Jeff (69, married) explicitly described the pleasures to be gained from rejecting the mundane non-commercial convention of one partner in favour of the commercial sphere: 'I think they're physically different, I'm just attracted to all of them, and it's nice not to be in a fixed relationship and cos I can be free to choose who I want.' It appears that economic privilege allows men to suspend certain elements of the non-commercial life that could be experienced as mundane, whilst selectively incorporating others.

Blurring of Boundaries

The mixing of the public and the private, the intimate with the commercial, pervades commercial sex markets. As I have demonstrated, the men who took part in my study, whilst attracted to commercial sex due to the difficulties or constraints of heterosexual non-commercial life, found that the two are not in opposition. Elements of non-commercial sexual experience are threaded throughout sexual commerce and, despite a bid to escape the mundane, the mundane bounded by what commerce allows (protection and variety) is essential. What I demonstrate in the concluding part of this chapter is how, through shifting mundane practices the commercial and non-commercial blur. That said, there are for these men dangers of losing control of the rational

management discourse that allows the men to define the boundaries of commercial involvement along with economic payment.

As has been shown, the non-commercial seeps into commercial encounters through the requirements of, for example, the men's desire for informal friendships or shared knowledge of families or work, (cf. Hart, 1998). There is a further mixing of what are considered opposite worlds when the boundaries between commercial and non-commercial encounters are blurred, for example, in terms of friendship or social involvement beyond the commercial sex encounter. Adrian (54, married) for example, described a relationship that goes beyond the sex, something that could be interpreted as an accelerated version of marriage, in a bond that gradually excludes sex:

We had sex, probably paid for an hour and the time I spent lasted longer. You know talking and chatting. Erm, then she had another person to see, but she said, "When when I've seen him, why don't you come back and we can go out and see, erm, some of the ghost tours"... We did meet up for a couple of hours, saw a ghost tour and so, it goes beyond just sex and there's been times when it's not paid.

However, for some men the social aspects of commercial sex extend to the whole culture of commercial sex. This is mostly made possible through the rise of online communities in which much sexual commerce is now located, as Chapter 2 explored. Matt (58, married) described a sense of 'community' on a message board. He explained that, 'We have a social life and, erm, so we can meet and have a drink and a chat or a meal and a chat as a group of people who

all happen to be involved in commercial sex, erm.’ Ben (61, married) described another message board run by one of his regulars: ‘The message board that [she] runs, and she has social events and I’ve been to a couple. I’ve met a lot of the ladies, a lot of the other gentlemen on the board. In fact there’s one that lives in [France] and ... next month and with a bit of luck I’ll be stopping with him.’ Dave (56, widow-dating) also described a parallel transition from online to offline and commercial to non-commercial:

You’re part of something a bit more complex than what you think, cos there’s a social life on [the message board], er. There’s meetings. You go to the pub and meet people ... non sort of, erm, punting type meeting. It’s just a meeting of people you’ve met on the board. A mixture of some of the girls and some of the punters on there. And go to, er, play tenpin bowls or dogs, a night at the dogs and things like that.

Charlie (63, married) described a relationship that developed without the internet as a facilitator and went beyond simple socialisation, developing into friendship that transgressed commercial sex boundaries and is no longer sexual:

I met her about nine years ago, ten years ago ... I still see her very occasionally, but we talk a lot on the phone in between and in some sort of strange way I’m like a deputy dad, in the way that she tells me her problems and I give her advice ... So that’s been a long term relationship ... We’re genuinely fond of each other.

In some ways this appears to be a one way relationship in that Charlie gives her advice about her problems. Nonetheless he claims genuine fondness is what the relationship is premised on, incorporating principles of the mundane to keep the relationship going. As Allen (1998) argues, friendship is framed by the context, the economic and social formations in which it occurs. The shifts of the sex industry and the wider social landscape have allowed these men to forge relationships around 'leisure' interests, with locality no longer the defining marker of friendship. The key marker here is a shared interest: sexual commerce. In forming these friendships based on a notion of similarity, identification becomes important. Friendship offers a way to normalise their practices and challenge popular negative discourses thus the men (and women) can affirm their identity in a more positive way.

Controlling relationships and the self

However, with the meshing of commercial and non-commercial worlds and the transgression of boundaries, came the need for control of both the relationship and accompanying feelings (cf. Sanders, 2008a; Peng, 2007). This may be confusing for clients. The rational management discourse drawn upon by the men, as has been shown, may be difficult to follow. There were several methods men used to ensure that their feelings within the relationships did not get out of hand. The blurring of commercial and non-commercial spheres, the consequence of shifting from masculine rationality to the realm of the stereotypically feminine emotionality (Lupton, 1998) could be challenging for some men. Will* (30, single) said: 'The only down side is not to get too

attached to the escort. That can make you vulnerable. Make sure you keep the relationship between client and escort and don't get too close emotionally.' To manage the vulnerability that Will* alludes to, reminding oneself of the purpose of the encounter can be an effective method for controlling feelings:

How do I draw the line? Well at first it gets pretty intense. I think anything in a relationship that suddenly hits off like that will become intense. I think if I were to be really stupid and not sort of sit back and say hang on a minute you're doing this for a bit of fun. You're not doing this to create a serious relationship. (Oliver, 63, married)

Similarly, via rational thought, Huw* (47, married) highlighted the need to frame the encounter, from the beginning, as a simple monetary transaction without romance:

The emotions have to be in check because it would have to end if I did, I know that I won't leave my wife and she wouldn't have me as a partner ... I have wondered what falling in love would be like, but it's not a positive place to be, it's just not going to work. The respect is not there, the thing that I married my wife for. The trust, I mean how could I trust a working girl? ... I would regard her as a friend and mistress, only I pay her so that gives me control ... With a civvy mistress, things can get out of hand, one can fall for the other, or both fall in love and that's destructive. I need to control the contact, what I pay for is the ability to walk away and know she won't ring me, we meet on my terms only, not when she wants to.

For others, the removal of emotional temptation is needed and that comes with distance between oneself and the sex worker in question. Mark (47, married) described methods similar to non-commercial dating, such as removal of phone numbers:

There's one lady at the moment that I'm not seeing that I did see regularly. As, I daren't see her at the moment cos I felt that the emotional connection was getting too strong, and, I didn't want. I felt that I needed to break away from that ... I just, erm, stopped ringing her and she rang me once or twice thereafter and I just didn't answer the telephone ... I've deleted her telephone number from my mobile now, so I don't have her number anymore. And, I still, at times, think, well you know, "Could I find her number somewhere?"

By creating a distance between himself and the sex worker Mark was able to take more control over his emotions, however his final comment suggests whilst these emotions have not completely disappeared, he is able to manage his behaviour. Distance as a successful mechanism for controlling one's feelings for, and engagement with sex workers, is a similar mechanism used to manage the stigmatised identity as Chapter 5 explored, especially where interviewees thought the relationships was getting too emotionally strong: 'There was one who I might have regarded as a bit dangerous emotionally ... We just hit it off and the sex itself was particularly good ... I did a long trip away and when I came back she's retired and moved on' (Paul, 64, married). Whilst Paul did not create the distance purposefully as Mark did, the notion of

distance from the sex worker achieved by working away and her retiring removed the 'temptation'.

These accounts refer to women that the men potentially got too involved with and the way they managed to refrain from doing so. However, some men did get too involved, developing strong feelings for some of the women which they had difficulty controlling and so found problematic, highlighting the vulnerabilities that men face with regards to masculinity and sexual relations as described in Chapter 3, which will be further elaborated on in Chapter 7 in terms of exercising power:

Physically it has been very good on some occasions, sometimes so good I doubt it could be matched. Emotionally it is very draining on you ... because it's what you look for in 'real life' and that need is temporarily satisfied for the time you are with a working girl, afterwards there is a low ... I started seeing it as a hobby to some extent. But I then used it as a replacement for a proper relationship with a woman which was not a good idea ... I felt I had a sexual outlet so didn't need to pursue girls for a normal relationship. (Felix*, 34, single)

Conclusion

This chapter has located commercial sex involvement within the context of male heterosexual experience. It has demonstrated the temporal and culturally contingent nature of heterosexual understandings and practice. Heterosexual experience is fluid and changes over time; it is not monolithic and varies

between and within men. I have argued that the attraction to commercial sex is in many ways constructed in opposition to what is available non-commercially, in that it sidesteps the bargain, burden, and mundane of heterosexual life. Yet the *paradox of payment* shows that requirements and expectations of commercial sex do draw on heterosexual ideals of emotionality, friendship, intimacy, communication, mutual pleasure and mundane practices albeit to varying degrees. Paradoxically, the typically male characteristic of rational thought binds the men to their commercial transactions, which in practice are emotionally involving. The boundaries between the commercial and non-commercial worlds blur and as such they do not always sit in opposition. This is both sought after by the men I interviewed and a potential source of difficulty.

Chapter 7 – Power

The centrality of power relations to commercial sex encounters (and indeed non-commercial, sexual encounters) has been well documented and explored within feminist scholarship, as Chapter 2 described (Barry, 1995; Jeffreys, 1997; Overall, 1992; O’Connell Davidson, 1998). However, despite extensive feminist theorising around the subject, feminist literature has yet to provide a comprehensive account of the complex nature of power within the client / sex worker relationship, as Brace and O’Connell Davidson (2000) call attention to in Chapter 2. Despite their argument being concerned with women’s experience, as much work on power in sex work tends to be, it also provides a starting point for an analysis of the power relations in sex work from a client perspective, given their focus on *diversity*. Focusing solely on dominance would have rendered my previous analysis impossible, for issues such as friendship, intimacy and emotionality would have been hidden under the dyadic object/ subject power relation within commercial sex.

Taking diversity as its starting point, then this chapter builds on nuanced accounts of the gendered power relations within sexual commerce, especially the work of Sanders (2005a, 2005b, 2008a), O’Connell Davidson (1998) and Wood (2000). Whilst not ‘celebrating’ sex work as transgressive sexual practice seeking to challenge heteropatriarchal norms (Zatz, 1997), these authors have begun to tease out the complexities of the client-sex worker relationship. The data presented below explores power within the context of gendered relations between men and women engaged in sexual commerce. It shows that a zero-

sum model of power, as put forward by radical feminists, is inadequate. Instead power emerges as relational, negotiated, resisted, and in a state of flux. Power is thus understood as *exercised* over one party, not something one has or holds.

Drawing on the narratives of men who took part in my study, I show that they are aware of issues of power in commercial sex. Whilst not denying this may be the case in some commercial sex encounters, they understand power in terms of their own practice, rejecting both abolitionist arguments and the hegemonic discourse of exploitation. Recognising exploitation within sexual commerce, the men nonetheless offered counter narratives, reducing charges of exploitation via distancing themselves from such practices and suggesting this was not what they were seeking in such encounters. These data suggest that a totalizing approach may be inadequate as a model for exploring power relations between sex worker and client in some cases. Instead I propose a model of power that is layered through time, and concerns access to resources and associated costs. I start by showing the processes through which power shifts between parties over time. As Foucault (1980) argues, power is not something that is 'held', but instead performed through relations and interactions. I then move on to demonstrate the centrality of resources and personal efficacy (Jenkins, 2009), showing that power may be exercised at a *cost* and rendering power relations less straightforward than some authors argue. Though my analysis utilises Foucault's (1980) notion of power as constructed through discourse, I address feminist claims that Foucault's theorising is gender blind, by ensuring that the heterosexual and thus gendered nature of relations of power is explicit, drawing

on Connell's (2005) concept of hegemonic masculinity and other feminist analysis of power relations within heterosexuality.

Exploitation and Respect

Nowhere else has the relationship between power and commercial sex been debated so intensely as within feminist theorising. Yet, much of this work lacks empirical support, as Chapter 2 suggested (Weitzer, 2005b). Furthermore, as Chapter 2 further argued, there is a critical lack of research from a client perspective (Schotten, 2005), an over-reliance on internet chat room data (Katsulis, 2009; Williams *et al.*, 2008), and a privileging of relations between western buyers and the erotic other (Martilla, 2008; O'Connell Davidson, 1998). Whilst these analyses contribute to wider knowledge of the global sex industry, we know little about male clients who claim to desire and deliberately seek out what they believe to be consensual and non-exploitative sexual commerce. Power and control have been underlying themes within my research in that heterosexuality and masculinity concern gendered power, an issue that is both implicit and explicit within the data and subsequent analysis.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, due to the social and political context, as Chapters 1 and 2 laid out regarding the government legal review of commercial sex laws, the murder of five sex workers in Ipswich, and resultant policy discourses the men did recognise the exploitative elements of commercial sex, in which abolitionists locate their argument. Whilst respondents did not display explicit exploitative tendencies or attitudes - such as a desire to seek out underage girls or trafficked women, this is not to say that these were not present. However,

there were strong counter narratives to long-standing abolitionist arguments and significant distancing of the self from these negative characteristics of both other clients and the industry.

- Consent and coercion

My data show men locating exploitative relationships in commercial sex, within the 'less savoury areas' (Martin, 55, married) of the industry. Issues of 'choice' and 'consent', rejected by abolitionists such as Barry (1996), were however threaded within the men's narratives. Bob (50, married) distinguished between trafficked girls, and other sex workers who were 'more likely to be doing it by themselves off their own back'. This idea of being controlled by another was described by Will* (30, single): 'I don't agree with the trafficking of women and I would never see an eastern European lady in a parlour unless I knew she wasn't being pimped.' Will however did not reveal how he can tell if women are being pimped. The idea of 'force' involving a third party, as in sex trafficking, was highlighted by Joe (56, divorced-single) who described trafficked women as: 'kidnapped and forced into prostitution.'

Sex workers' drug dependency was also highlighted within discussions of power relations. As Oliver (63, married) explained: 'I have to agree there is a darker side to it where the girls are pimped, they're doing it just to feed a drug habit.' Drug addiction as a factor 'forcing' women into sex work was distanced spatially through references to 'the corner of the streets' by Ben (61, married) who, amongst others, said that the women he sees are involved 'out of free choice. None of them have been forced into it or erm done it to, erm, feed any

of their own drug habits...They're doing it as a free choice, as a way of earning money.'

Despite connotations of street sex markets with exploitation and drugs, five of the 35 participants said they had bought sex from a street sex worker. Four said this happened in the past, of whom two stated that it had been their first time and they quickly changed the locations they visited. They only visited the street because they were unaware of any other locations or ways of taking part. Jack (56, married) said he began with girls on the street but changed to parlours to reduce the risk of gendered exploitation and control, as these women were more likely to be there through choice: 'It's less risky for both parties, but I mean I switched to massage parlours quite early on because I think that the women that work there are probably, well there more there through choice.' As Sanders (2008a) suggests, these men deliberately altered their practices to participate in the more invisible and what the men presumed to be, less exploitative, off street markets.

In contrast many participants said they had not, and would not visit street sex markets. Matt (58, married) told me: 'I've not been involved in street prostitution and I don't intend to.' Alan (57, widow-dating) similarly stated: 'I wouldn't feel comfortable with girls on the street level personally. I would never go there.' This rejection of street sex markets and trafficked women sheds light on gendered power relations in terms of men's practices. This counter narrative and distancing from certain locations was common, showing that men recognise issues of power and exploitation within commercial sex, but through

their own practices seek to minimise this. Thus, power is understood in a way that is strikingly similar to Foucault (1980).

The risk of collective disapproval, as experienced by Charlie (63, married), reflected internet benchmarking of reasonable and unreasonable punters: 'the people who are likely to read PunterNet are likely not to be punting down the bottom end of the market.' This virtual space is thus utilised as a site to resist sex work encounters potentially based on exploitative hierarchical power relations. As Sanders (2008a) and Earle and Sharp (2008b) suggest, sites stipulate standards and expectations about client behaviour, drawing moral boundaries around sex work practices for clients, as Chapter 2 described. Thus, men distinguished between acceptable and unacceptable clients (Peng, 2007), also constructing client identities via similarity and difference based upon power relations within sex work. The 'collective' power of men's internet presence will be returned to later.

Strategies for managing the risk of exploitative situations were commonly described, again constructed in relation to the 'other' and strategic avoidance centred round: location and the avoidance of street workers, low end brothels (as mentioned above) and in some cases of foreign women altogether. those who did visit foreign workers assessed whether foreign women were trafficked, through attention to their language skills, perceived happiness and engagement. Drawing on Wrong's (1968) notion that in all social interactions people exercise mutual power over each other's behaviour, I argue that the relation can be asymmetrical in that the subject exercises greater control over the object.

Bob (50, married) described his strategic avoidance of exploitative situations: 'If they have a good reputation and are on the net with their own website, they're more likely to be doing it by themselves off their own back.' Bob said that as well as the client's efforts to minimise exploitation, sex workers needed to establish themselves as non-coerced and engaging in sex work as a choice, a demanding task:

When you spend time with them you can guess if they want to be there or not. It's about doing your research beforehand. This might be why I go for women over 30. There's loads of students on the net and the only reason they're doing it is for the money and because of their student debts. It makes me feel more comfy if I feel that the women have a choice. Even though they might not be able to get a different job, this is the only job they can get, if they go to the length of building a website and if there's a field report.

Men's recognition of issues of power and coercion is significant in that they would direct their practices to avoid or minimise the possibility of entering into a commercial sex encounter where the sex worker might be operating against her will. The gendered nature of the relation between male client and female sex worker that abolitionist feminist models of power base their argument on, does, however, still need to be addressed.

Male Dominance

Feminist abolitionist accounts of the power relations were present in the men's narratives in two ways. Firstly, they addressed the 2008 government review that

framed commercial sex in moralistic and solely exploitative terms, with a specific agenda towards demonising heterosexual men:

Harriet Harman would have us all believe that you know these are either poor, abused, desperate junkies who can't keep it together apart from going on the street and earning 30 quid for their next piece of crack. It's terrible, abusive, paedophile, murdering bastards who you know have nothing better to do than seeking their next victim. And of course that's complete crap, ... commercial sex is very poorly represented and I think what Harriet Harman and the rest of them are doing is doing no body any favours apart from probably propping up their own very distorted views of the commercial sex world which are based on a very distorted view of life in general anyway. ... I think they choose to ignore the things that don't fit in their view of the world and ... they're relying on prejudice and stuff to carry it (Joe, 56, divorced-single)

Some participants explicitly identified the practices of other clients which followed the male dominance model, as suggested by abolitionist feminists such as Barry (1995) and McKinnon (1989). These practices were, again, distinguished in terms of race and trafficked women and spatial location of market involvement: 'There are some men who have the opportunity to go with what I'd call "higher class, better quality", but they get a turn on or whatever from going to that bottom end of the market because they feel, more able to abuse and mistreat the girls' (Mark (47, married). This issue of dominance however was not exclusively packaged into men's narratives of trafficked or

street sex workers: it also focused on 'other' men's practices within off street consensual¹¹⁴ sex work, as Ryan (48, long-term partner) explained:

I'm actually shocked by the behaviour of some of the men who go to places... [on the internet] one of the women [was] saying she hated working in a parlour and you get men coming in who through an entire service didn't speak to them, it was just a grunt and to try and get away with being as rough as they can erm, and just generally being unpleasant and trying to get away without paying and that kind of thing.

Once again, there were explicit counter narratives within what the men told me. Consequently, the way some men in my sample understood power relations was in terms of pleasure; in opposition to men's violence towards women. In constructing the sex worker-client relationship in a non hierarchical fashion, issues of respect and pleasure were ways in which power was understood. Mark's (47 married) narrative suggests a rejection of zero sum power relations and distances himself from exploitative ends of the market in the context of 'respect' and in terms of 'acceptable' client behaviour, based on power within the encounter. He implies that whilst hierarchical power models may exist where some men use masculine strength to ensure compliance, for him power is understood in a way that is similar to Foucault (1980) as negotiated, exercised and circulatory, he also highlights the embodiment of power as exercised:

I want to treat a lady with respect...I don't feel I can demand anything:
you know it's not my body, it's her body...I don't feel I have right to

¹¹⁴ I am assuming this is consensual due to the sex workers presence on the internet

put pressure on. A lot of men do put pressure on and force these things...the girls tell me that many men when they're about to cum grab hold of their head and push it down so that they can't, so the girls has no option...anything that is forcing the girl to do anything that they don't want is not right, it's not acceptable.

Layered Model of Power

The previous section sought to address male client's awareness of, and practices in relation to, power within commercial sex. It argued that men are aware of power relations drawing on arguments which resemble both sex 'work' and abolitionist perspectives, to direct their practices away from exploitative encounters. I briefly introduced the idea of power as social, interactional and negotiated, as suggested by Foucault (1978) and Wrong (1968). What I propose in the remainder of this chapter is a three layered model of the complexity of power relations between client sex and worker. Thus following Davis (1991) and Komter (1991) I argue against a grand theory of power in sexual commerce *and* within gender relations. The first layer addresses the multiplicity of positions that men, as bearers of sexual, aged, gendered, relational identities, occupy in relation to women¹¹⁵ (and other men) across time, so revealing the fluid nature of power. This approach dispels static models of male dominance, emphasising the relational, interactional and negotiated aspects of power described above. The second layer highlights the

¹¹⁵ I am drawing on Brace and O'Connell Davidson's (2001) statement that feminist theorising have begun to address the multiplicity of subject positions that women have occupied, yet for my purpose I am placing this within the context of men by considering men's positionality and identities. I am using the terms object / subject to refer to Brace and O'Connell's master / subject dichotomy.

resources available to, or lacking for, either party in the commercial sex encounter. It is these that allow power to be negotiated in ways that totalising models cannot adequately explain. The third layer draws attention to the cost of power, demonstrating that exercising power is not as straightforward as hierarchical or abolitionist models portray.

Time

Power [is] ... something which circulates ... it is never localised here or there, it is never in anybody's hands ... Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are in a position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising power (Foucault, 1980: 98).

In order to demonstrate the circulatory nature of power and reject static models, I wish to take a case study approach to demonstrate how power shifts over time, by grounding Foucault's theory of power to the specific context of how one man negotiates his heterosexual experiences, identity and practices. By taking Ben's narrative I will highlight the sequential processes of power and vulnerability from before commercial sex involvement, to selecting a sex worker and end with after the encounter. I do not suggest that all clients are the same and that this model can be fully generalisable; rather, I use this case to unravel the fluid nature of power and locate this within the context of masculine heterosexuality.

At the time of interview Ben was 61, married with 2 children, educated to degree level and self-employed. Ben could be seen as "Mr. Ordinary" (McLeod, 1982), in that he is married with two children, thus conforming to heterosexual norms, and he claims to have not had affairs, thus adhering to monogamy

before he started paying for sex. He did not imply that he had an overactive, uncontrollable sex drive, nor could he be located with the stereotype of men unable to attract women due to socially pathological tendencies or characteristics, since he had sexual partners (with various degrees of success) during his younger years, before meeting his wife. In a rich narrative, we see Ben, in both his commercial and non-commercial life negotiating power relations with women. These data highlight Foucault's (1980) notion of the circulatory nature of power, which Ben both exercised and also experienced. Having concluded that a hierarchical model of gendered power is insufficient, I will argue that both women and men have sources of power in relationships through gendered differentiated positions in discourse.

In Ben's younger years he constructed sexuality from an essentialist perspective: 'As a boy I masturbated like, like I think every boy does ... it's just a natural thing ... something that's inbuilt.' He normalizes masturbation from a gendered perspective through presenting an essential, innate and thus masculinist account of sexual practices. Consequently, similar to the data presented in Chapter 6, his early experiences of sex were located within male drive models of sexuality, the 'male in the head' (Holland *et al.* 1998), which prioritised male pleasure at the cost of neglecting female pleasure:

They were enjoyable. Although I look back with some degree of shame with the sense that I was not in the slightest bit aware or interested in my, er, partner, er, girlfriend at the time, er, needs and, er, feelings ... I

was very, very selfish, erm. And once I was satisfied that was it ... as far as I was concerned, cos I knew no better.

Again he presents a gendered account, in that he was the subject and his partner was the object. From this it can be seen that Ben was able to exercise power by understanding sexuality as a male drive, as Chapter 3 explained (Hollway, 1984; Mooney-Somers and Ussher, 2008). Thus, he focused on only his pleasure with disregard for his female partner. He made reference to his lack of knowledge and the subsequent reflexive process of recognising shame. Thus he suggests that the discourses he had available to him at the time constrained his understanding of sexual engagement.

However, over time, this shifted: 'As I got older, as I got to know things to speak to people. To realise that ... the partner needs to get satisfaction from the encounter as much as I do. It's just a natural progression really. It's got to the point now where it's very important to me.' Therefore over time Ben's experience of sex shifted from a focus on male domination through seeking masculine pleasure to a more reciprocal account of mutual pleasure, by drawing on the knowledge available to him via interaction with others. The intersections of age and gender suggest that his identity as an older man had implications for power relations within his sexual encounters. He also highlighted the social and interactional nature of discourse, and thus power, by highlighting how, through communication, he was able to engage with different knowledge claims regarding sexual practices and gendered pleasure.

In Ben's married life, there was a key turning point in which the negotiation of power between him and his wife located him as the object to her subject, suggesting a shift in power relations as Wrong (1968) and Foucault (1980) both draw attention to, as Chapter 3 argued. Again he draws on gendered and aged identities, and discourses of women's reduced sex drive during the later years of marriage, the significance and consequences of which were explored in Chapter 6:

It's no secret that she just decided that. She's four years older than me and when she reached 60 she decided that sex was no longer an option in the marriage. It wasn't up for discussion, it wasn't anything that was. It just ceased. It wasn't that, all that frequent anyway, erm. Which tends to happen I suppose with a lot of marriages. As 30 odd years. Erm, but there was some sexual, erm, element to the marriage. But it just stopped. She just decided that she, she just felt too old. Nothing I could say or do would, was going to change her mind. I've learnt over the years that once she er makes her mind up then it's pointless me arguing it. It only leads to more arguments. For a while I just accepted that as my lot. Er, you know. This, this is something that happens and I just had to deal with it and live with it.

However, his wife's resistance meant repression of his own sexuality, leading him to question what to do and draw on a rational management discourse, explained in Chapter 6 (Jackson and Scott, 1997) to help 'solve' this problem: 'It was something I thought long and hard about and I even thought about the

consequences; what would happen? But in the end I, er, decided that; at my age, I still feel quite young and I'm still active, I still have a need for the services these ladies provide.' In that he was concerned about the 'consequences', his thinking was informed by discourses around infidelity and commercial sex. Yet in a process of reflexivity he drew on his aged identity and concluded that he still 'needs' sex, thereby constructing sex as a 'natural' in keeping with a male sex drive discourse (Hollway, 1984; Mooney-Sommers and Ussher, 2008). This suggests that, over time, his understanding of sex shifted from a male drive discourse focused on male pleasure, to a more reciprocal model. However, when his sexuality was constrained, he returned to understanding sex within more essentialist and male sex drive terms, thus paralleling Korobov's (2010) findings in which men place themselves as a victim to women's barriers to sexual access, as Chapter 3 explored.

As suggested by Foucault (1980) however, power is not simply oppressive and also entails resistance, as evidenced in his wife's resistance to his sexual advances. In turn, his resistance to his wife's exercise of power was productive in that new behaviours were enacted by him; that of engaging in paying for sex. His opportunity to resist the constraints on his sexuality reflected the availability of material resources, such as the internet. Thus, Ben, like other men in my sample, constructs alternative discourses of masculinity, femininity, sexuality, and intimacy. They do so by negotiating and resisting dominant discourse. However, Ben, like other men, was also constrained by the discourses available to him within that context, at that particular time, as Foucault suggests (1978).

Despite appearing to be in a position of power in choosing to engage in commercial sex, Ben also experienced significant vulnerabilities, rendering him both subject, able to exercise power, and the object undergoing constraint. As discussed above, one is limited by the discourses available, despite having access to resources such as the internet and thus information about the sex industry, Ben still constructed commercial sex in terms of 'preconceived' ideas about the sex industry. His initial encounter generated feelings of vulnerability, in that the encounter was in opposition to heterosexual norms, he was not meeting a hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005); he as a man was not in control, he as a man did not know what to do, as Chapter 5 explored in terms of identification. His masculine identity was thus under threat as he became the object of the sex worker's power, by virtue of her experience and knowledge:

Yeh, I was just a nervous wreck and absolute. I kept asking myself, "Am I doing the right thing?"... I had preconceived ideas and I wasn't sure, er, what to expect. What would happen, erm, how she would act, how she'd expect me to act. I mean it was all totally new to me. I hadn't a clue as to what I was supposed to do or when I was supposed to do anything, you know who made the first move. You know, as I say, we sat there for probably half an hour chatting and drinking wine. At the time it was crossing my mind, "Do I suggest that we go to bed now or do I wait for her to say something?"

Ben, despite being male, and located within what some argue is the politically advantaged category of 'men'¹¹⁶ (see Connell, 2005), experienced his ability to exercise power as unstable; it was not something he *held*, it was fluid. Ben is now a regular client and sees a number of sex workers regularly. His experiences with one sex worker highlight the negotiated, circulatory aspect of power relations further. In the narrative below Ben draws attention to negotiation within the commercial sex encounter, discussing this in the context of the clothing she wore. When he suggested things, it placed him as the subject to her object, yet when she chooses what to wear, it places him as the object to her subject, which nonetheless he experiences positively:

If I've asked for anything in particular then, they will do their best to do that. Sometimes I, I even go out and buy lingerie, which I've never done before ... It was not so long ago with Isabelle in fact, er, go in the bathroom and said, "I'll be a few minutes" ... When she came out she was wearing a leather, like a leather Basque with thigh length boots, and the effect was just absolutely tremendous. It was just something I, I didn't expect. That kind of thing, you know, that sort of element of surprise.

As discussed in chapter 6, being a regular client can be challenging. Discourse surrounding commercial sex suggests that exchanging money for sex acts as method for emotional protection, and enabling men to have some control over their emotions, through a rational management discourse as I also outlined in

¹¹⁶ However, as I have argued not all men are in an advantageous position.

Chapter 6. Ben described the shifts over time in his relationship with one sex worker: 'We've become very, very close and very much in tune with one and other', thus demonstrating the seepages and parallels between the commercial and non-commercial, also emphasised in Chapter 6. This presents a conundrum with regards to emotional vulnerability and positions of relative powerlessness as Ben explained:

There is a danger and I, I, have spoken quite often about this with Isabelle. Because we have, erm, such deep feelings for one another, erm, when, we all have periods where we have down things and we're emotionally vulnerable. And I won't see her on those occasions. If I am feeling down. If anything has happened in my life that has caused me stress or strain ...I won't see her professionally. I am concerned that my feelings for her professionally would change. She would make some gesture that she would do as a normal, I would be afraid that I would take that the wrong way ... [and] suddenly fall in love with her. And then that would be disastrous as that would just destroy what friendship we have. So, so I am aware that, that, er, if, if I get emotionally involved on that side of things it is going to cause enormous problems. But I just take steps to avoid it ... [by] being aware of them and I'm conscious to keep them where they are and not let them get out of hand.

Ben draws upon discourse that posits commercial sex and *deep* emotional engagement as incompatible and 'dangerous'. By discussing this in terms of his emotional vulnerability he implies that it is he who is the object to her subject

in terms of her 'normal gestures'. He recognises men's (and women's) emotional vulnerability during times of strain, yet sex is not dangerous due to Isabelle's desire to have a relationship in which she would be the object, it is his own powerful emotional reaction. Ben oscillates between being the object through his emotional reactions and being the subject in that he can suppress his own emotions. This reflects the engendering of emotions in discourse via the separation of emotionality and rationality as discussed in Chapter 6 (Jackson and Scott, 1997; Seidler, 1992).

Emotional vulnerability is not the only issue within the negotiation of power relations within commercial sex. During the encounter, Ben is dependent on the sex worker's performance to make him feel that they want to be with him, as Chapters 2 and 5 highlighted; thus she is able to exercise power to either confirm or shatter his illusion, thereby dictating how pleasurable his experience is by her performance of his fantasy:

The ladies refer to it as the Girl Friend Experience which is what it is. Cos for that moment in time they are my girl friend, they are good at their job and I believe that. You know, it's, it's like me being with somebody, they feel and I feel that they want to be with me, they're doing it with me cos they want to. Erm, as, while that belief is there, while that feeling is there, then it is a very enjoyable experience.

Ben implies that the discourse of the 'girlfriend experience' is both constructed by and performed by female sex workers. In that they construct this discourse, they are the subject to his object exercising power by making it believable and

confirming his experience. However, despite the language of 'girl friend', the economic exchange prevents the responsibility and commitment of a non-commercial relationship, one which men seek to control, thereby allowing Ben to situate himself as subject in relation to her position as object, as found by Murphy (2003) and Wood (2000) discussed in Chapter 2.

Through a detailed case study this section has shown that power is not static or innately held by one party. Over time (and context), power circulates within gendered relations, with slippages between object / subject positions and resulting implications for power relations. Thus, Ben, as other men who engage in paid-for sex, shift between being able to exercise power and submitting to the power of someone else. This demonstrates the complex, relational, nature of power; its two-way dynamic. To develop my account of the complexities of power relations I now consider the *resources* needed for either party to exercise power.

Resources

To explore how power is negotiated within commercial sex I wish to emphasise the nature of power as efficacy: 'how people achieve their ends and fulfil their purposes' (Jenkins, 2009: 144). The ways and means utilised to pursue a goal - the *resources* drawn upon, are central to Jenkins' argument that power depends on access to resources. The commercial aspect of paid-for sex is highlighted by sex 'work' proponents in that the sex worker is selling 'something' for monetary compensation, she is engaging in a form of labour (Alexander, 1997; Queen, 1997). However, as Bernstein (2007) suggests there has been little

exploration of precisely what is bought and sold. From a sex worker perspective, the element of selling emotional labour has been well explored, yet from a client perspective the only resource explored is their economic power. Whilst the economic element cannot be denied and is essential to an understanding of the gendered nature of sex work, especially as located in wider structures of women's labour market location, it is not the only resource. Nor is emotional labour, thus I draw out the resources that allow power to be negotiated.

As Jenkins (2009) suggests, resources take various forms and offer different ways and means, to achieve ends: they are contextually contingent, can be combined and specific resources may be more appropriate for the achievement of particular ends. At the most basic level it appears that men have access to money, and sex workers are in possession of a female body. However, there is a much greater variety of resources that both sex workers and clients have available to them, which in themselves are gendered, and constructed and maintained through available discourses. Clients, to varying degrees have (free) time, money, access to the internet, including information and social networks as well as its capacity to facilitate consumption, and emotional control. Sex workers' potential resources include social skills, their capacity for emotional control, ability to perform emotional labour and present the (illusion) of friendliness, reciprocity, intimacy and fantasy, their ability to confirm or deny masculine identity and their capacity to assess the risks introduced by potential clients including negotiation skills. Also sex workers have management skills with respect to the ambiguous legal context of their work, sexual knowledge

and skills, their body and its characteristics and capabilities in terms of femininity and female sexuality, access to virtual information and social networks, marketing skills, and time.

This descriptive list suggests that there is more than simply 'sex' and 'money' involved in sexual commerce in terms of resources that enable a goal to be pursued. Furthermore, it is not only the resources that one has, but also the resources that one lacks in conjunction with the resources the other party can access. Clients may lack access to sex, or the type of sex they want, as sex workers may lack access to money. However, they both lack social acceptance and share the risk of a spoiled identity (Goffman, 1968). Both may lack emotional control, and have concerns about safety. Consequently, individuals, both client and sex worker, engage in commercial sex at a significant cost in terms of emotional and physical vulnerability, and their identity.

Thus whilst it seems they differ with respect to the resources available to them, the resources they lack may be similar. It is this distinction between the resources each party can access, which they can mobilise, maximise or invest (Jenkins, 2009), and the resources they lack that lends power its status as social, interactional, negotiated, fluid, and circulatory. I now begin by exploring the resources men, as clients have access to, firstly money, whilst also suggesting other resources that the men combine such as time and emotional control that become inextricably linked with economic privilege. Following this the resources available to sex workers in terms of their female status and gendered characteristics will be explored. The material resources made possible through

the internet, that are available to both men as clients and women as sex workers will be revealed, thus firmly locating this analysis in the social and cultural, implying the discursive element of power relations and highlighting the circulatory aspect of power.

- Men and Money

Men's economic power relative to women has been a key concern of feminist theorising and activism (Walby, 1989). Men could be less likely to engage in sexual commerce if they lacked the necessary economic resources, although, this may not always be the case, with significant economic consequences (as will be described later). Nonetheless, men who pay for sex are a heterogeneous group, in that the economic privilege of some is significantly different to the position of others. This contrast can be seen between Adam (56, married), who described the economic aspect 'in terms of me earning a relatively small amount of cash', and to Huw* (47, married), who experiences the need to compartmentalise his income: 'With the money it's difficult because I don't have my own account; I have to squirrel away cash ... using a little left over each month.' Regardless of the specific impact of cost however, men who pay for sex, all have access to economic resources. But how does money shape the relations of power within sexual commerce?

Traditionally the mixing of money with the intimate sphere was a contentious partnership as they "represent contradictory principles whose intersection generates conflict, confusion and corruption" (Zelizer, 2005: 27). However, it is the implications of the *symbolic* representation of money within paid for sex

that impacts particularly upon the power relation between sex workers and clients. In terms of heterosexual experience, as explored in Chapter 6, money in commercial sex allows clients to defy conventional heterosexual expectations and alleviates the burden and bargain of heterosexuality. Thus within non-commercial heterosexuality men are the object of women's subject, in that women can potentially determine whether sexual access is limited, constrained, unavailable or obtainable. Money, as a resource in this context, is of relatively limited use, losing its value¹¹⁷ in that it cannot be straightforwardly drawn upon in order to obtain sex.

In commercial sex, however, money regains its value. For example, if the sex worker lacks this resource, money offers men the power to access guaranteed sex, a difficulty explored in Chapter 6. As Will* (30 single) described: 'No more messing about with games and will she won't she. You knew that once you'd paid you'd get sex and to be honest I'd never had that all my life.' This economic power afforded to men allowed them to obtain the unobtainable: 'Before ... sex was something I thought I'd never have, unobtainable ... I know I can, with the money I can get whatever I want really, except probably not often enough' (Josh, 54, married). Thus economic privilege grants men access to women's bodies and guaranteed sexual encounters in commercial contexts, So, the need to negotiate conventional heterosexual norms in order to access women's bodies, as described in Chapter 6 is removed.

¹¹⁷ For a review of sex as a female resource and the reasons why women may not be as economically dependent on men today see Baumeister and Vohns (2004)

Huw* (47, married), for example explained that: 'I would regard her as a friend and mistress, only I pay her so that gives me control ... I need to control the contact, what I pay for is the ability to walk away and know she won't ring me, we meet on my terms only, not when she wants to.' He went on to describe the destructive element of emotions, thus emphasising the safety secured through money: 'With a civvy mistress, things can get out of hand, one can fall for the other, or both fall in love and that's destructive.' The difference between commercial and non-commercial power relations in terms of contact were explained by Tom (64, widow-single):

If it were a non paid sexual relationship the, erm, the power balance would be different. Erm, whereas the deal in a paid sex relationship is it's, it's up to me whether I get in touch with that woman ever again or not. Erm, and I don't think she would ever email me if I don't email her ... The women I see for paid sex respect the fact that they shouldn't pursue the client, you know, and they, they don't. I have heard of it happening you know where escorts are texting guys saying, "I've got a cheap offer this week" or something. But really I think that's way out of order. So, erm, it's entirely up to me the extent that I have this relationship or not, where as in a non paid relationship I suppose you create obligations towards each other, erm, and there's more of a kind of wondering, "Oh have I overdone it?", or "Have I paid enough attention to her". Erm, sometimes women can be difficult to read in terms of, erm. They go a bit frosty on you and it's because you've not done

enough of this or you've done too much of this. And erm, that's not present in a paid sex relationship.

Therefore, the symbolic power that money offers can be seen in terms of bargains around access; either granting access or controlling access and the resulting levels of commitment (or emotional tensions). Access to female sexuality is guaranteed and no longer needs to be negotiated or bargained over, yet money allows the men to control the access by meeting only on their terms.

Similarly, there is the power that money offered concerning the ability to choose when to have sex and the fact that it was a self-centred activity. As Felix* (34, single) revealed: 'With non commercial; I feel I have to perform regularly, with commercial I can pick and choose when I fancy.' Furthermore, when taking part men were guaranteed that they were 'going to get what you wanted to, most of the time'. Paul (64, married) described this idea in terms of ownership of time: 'It's very me orientated ... it's my time out.' This was corroborated by Huw* (47, married): 'There's a clear understanding of expectations, you concentrate on taking your pleasure without worrying about the impact on the other person – they are not there for anything other than for your sexual pleasure.' Joe (56, divorced-single) also described focusing on one's own pleasure:

The great joy of a working girl is that you don't have to worry about pleasing her. You've already pleased her by sticking 150 quid in her wallet. If she does enjoy it that's great ... You're not expected to make her enjoy it ... you don't have to feel guilty if you don't make her come.

And I found that quite a relief ... there's also the thought that if you have actually paid for something, you tend to try and enjoy it more.

Thus, economic privilege relieves the burden of male heterosexuality in terms of pleasure and performance, men's interpretations of these relations of power reflecting a discourse of male entitlement and male pleasure, in which female pleasure is either disregarded or constructing differently when economic gain is at stake.

As discussed above, and in Chapter 6, non-commercial encounters involve bargaining in terms of access and so extend beyond the sexual encounter in terms of time and communication; heterosexuality is more than just sex, as Hockey *et al.* (2008) argue and men have to direct their practices towards deciphering and meeting women's demands (Mooney-Somers and Usher, 2008), which presents challenges. This can also be expressed in terms of the burden of emotional engagement. The power of money, in addition to guaranteeing access to sex, also provided an element of emotional safety in terms of emotional control, as Gareth (37, single) described:

I'm paying for a service and I'm getting a service and emotions don't come into it. I think if I allowed emotions to come into it then I'd get into trouble...I don't wanna fall in love with a working girl so I, I, I find it convenient to look upon it as a purely business transaction.

Gareth described how money allows him to frame the interaction in a business context and thus control his emotions, resembling discourses that stipulate that

money and the intimate sphere cannot mix and those pertaining to a rational management discourse, his individual pursuit of pleasure. It is not just his emotions that money is able to control; by including money in the intimate encounters, it symbolises to the men that they can also control the sex worker's emotions in terms of attachment (implying that controlling non-commercial partners' emotions was both unachievable or problematic). Adam (56, married) contrasted commercial to non-commercial alternatives which involved more than money to explain this:

There's always going to be emotional involvement, but here is far, far less and also with an affair, erm, the woman involved wants more than money. She is actually looking for a relationship and blokes and women are generally very different in that blokes will be more than happy with just the sex and without the relationship that's providing he's got a relationship in his life ... What's on offer is good sex for money. What isn't on offer is a relationship and love and the whole nine yards of that. And if I was looking for that I'd probably go to a dating agency or go to a club.

As shown, men's economic privilege allows them to defy the norms of heterosexuality, due to the symbolic power implied by money. By using this resource they can gain guaranteed access to women's bodies and sexual labour in which no further communication is necessary after the encounter. Some men are also free from issues pertaining to performance, pleasure and emotional entanglement, which can present significant vulnerabilities for men, as Chapters

3 and 6 explored. In sum, this would suggest that money as a resource implies a significant amount of control within the commercial sex encounter and places men in a position of power.

These narratives seem to imply fixed notions of power relations and a static subject / object relation in commercial sex, as abolitionists argue. However, it is not quite that simple. It is not enough for the man to hand his money over and do what he wants, since there are complex negotiations that occur in which the sex worker draws on her own resources, as O'Connell Davidson's (1998) account of Desiree in Chapter 2 described. This will be discussed next.

- Agency and skills

Sex 'work' debates explore sex work as a site of agency and choice and as a form of work, including the rights that should entail (Alexander, 1997). Some of the participants explained why the women they visited were involved in the commercial sex industry in a similar way as sex 'work' perspectives do.

Through these narratives¹¹⁸ it was clear that they situated the women, and thus their own behaviour, in opposition to zero sum models of sex work as male domination (for example, Jeffreys, 1997). This suggests that exploring sexual commerce in terms of male domination only, fails to recognise the social, cultural and material realities of both parties and their implications for the power relations within sex work.

¹¹⁸ It must be recognised that this is from a client view and I have no way of knowing if what the men said to me was a true reflection of the situation. In light of this, the analysis can only inform us of how the men understood sex workers' involvement in the sex industry and may not be an accurate account of the actual context.

The decisions that sex workers make in regards to a choice of employment and thus their means of economic stability or dependence were mentioned by many participants, suggesting the men saw elements of sex worker agency. In parallel to a resource model of power, this implies that men see sex workers' lack of economic resources as something which would allow them to exercise power. Yet they also see sex work as a choice, with sex workers drawing on their own resources as a means to an end. Several participants were clear that the female sex workers they visited had made informed choices regarding entrance into commercial sex:

I don't exploit and I don't think I'm exploited by people ... I see people who have chosen to do this for various reasons. Erm, in one, case erm, it's because the individual needs a way of earning money that isn't tied to set hours or periods. (Matt, 58, married)

That they are choosing ... to work in that industry ... it's not about them being forced ... them seeing it as a, a job, as a profession ... women that recognise that they can earn more being sex workers than they can being a secretary or a teacher. (Jack, 56, married)

These narratives suggest various reasons for entrance into commercial sex which are common to feminist arguments about women's position within labour markets, central to the structural emphasise pertaining to feminist theorising of patriarchy, as Chapter 3 explored (Walby, 1989). The constraints of conventional employment, either in practical terms such as working hours or in terms of relative economic reward, are thus highlighted.

Understanding women's economic situation was not, however, always a straightforward process and there was concern among men about women's economic situation outside of the commercial sex context. (John, 40, married) for example confessed: '[I] worry about ... am I taking advantage of this woman and whatever her financial circumstances are outside of the context of the parlour.' There was explicit realisation that for some women economic hardship was the reason that they entered sex work due to the financial reward that could be offered by utilising the resource of their body:

Cos I then asked her the question, "Why did you start in the industry?", and the honest answer is money. "I had no money, the only thing I'd got was my body so I decided that I'd make money ... tell me where else can somebody with no, with little qualifications earn three hundred pounds a day?" (Mark, 47, married)

Thus the structural inequalities faced by some women in terms of difficulties with labour market such as the practicalities of childcare, economic reward, and women's lack of education were highlighted in men's interviews. Their narratives suggest that the men construct women *choosing* to take part in sex work as rational agents weighing up what available resources they had in order to secure economic reward, a notion rejected by abolitionist feminists such as Barry (1995).

In terms of resources, sex work has been explored most thoroughly in terms of men benefitting from women's emotional labour, and women benefitting from their capacity to perform it (Brewis and Linstead, 2000b; Sanders, 2005a,

20005b). Sex workers have additional functional resources such as their the ability to educate men in terms of how sexual commerce should be entered into and sexual health education, and through providing functional services such as to those with disabilities (Alexander, 1997; Queen, 1997; Sanders, 2005a).

There has also been increased recognition of other resources that sex workers can draw upon, such as their ability to provide social, emotional and intimate reciprocity, what Plumridge *et al.* (1997a) term the 'myth of mutuality' (see Sanders, 2008a also); their ability to either confirm or reject men's sexual identities (Frank, 1998; Murphy, 2003); their control over access to particular part of their bodies and consequently sexual services (Sanders, 2005a); their capacity to deploy embodied responsiveness such as eye contact and smiling, all of which can be used as to affirm a masculine identity (Wood, 2000).

O'Connell Davidson's (1998) detailed account emphasises some sex workers' ability to exercise power based on the context such, as the sex worker's own economic position, her own personal biography, and the way she is able to conduct her business, as Chapter 2 described in detail.

In that sex workers utilised these resources men obtained what was hard work, unobtainable or involving intense unstable negotiation in non-commercial spheres, so being spared part of the heterosexual burden explored in Chapter 6:

You've paid for the girl to talk to you and you know that there's no, "Are we going to get on?" There's no sort of doubt about what's going to happen at the end of the night like talking to a girl and trying to pull them ... it's a totally different scenario ... talking to an escort ... they

still pretend they're interested in you. But if you meet a girl in a bar and you talk about something that isn't of interest to her, you've blown your chance haven't you? (Gareth, 37, single)

As Gareth suggests, the doubt and uncertainty in commercial sex has been removed, yet it is not solely based on an economic exchange, instead it involves affirmation from the sex worker: her pretence to be interested in both him and the encounter that suggests to him that the heterosexual burden has been sidestepped, as Chapter 5 explored in terms of validating his masculine identity. Drawing on Hochschild (1983), the emotional labour that the sex worker must take part in by engaging in the 'pretence' in being interested in the social side of the encounter can be interpreted as a vital resource. However, it is not only social engagement that the men require. The actual embodied responses through which the 'myth of mutuality' (Plumridge *et al.*, 1997a) is brought to life were also essential. Sex workers have to possess the embodied skills to minimise the mechanical aspects of the encounter, in parallel with giving the impression that they have received enjoyment. These two factors in conjunction are essential to disguising the commoditised nature of the encounter. So whilst economic power may be an enabling dimension of why men choose to take part in commercial sex, it is essential that the sex worker is skilled at hiding this fact:

If you didn't put some of the knowledge that it is play acting on hold then you wouldn't enjoy yourself and you'd be wasting your money. (Alan, 57, widow-dating)

Sometimes it appears ... that the woman's just going through the motions and in that case I don't go back, so ... I don't know. It's making women sound like commodities isn't it. Which is, I suppose fundamentally what it is about? But, what I like is women that don't make it seem like it's a commodity that makes it seem that it is natural. Yes I am paying for it, but they seem to get an element out of, something out of it as well. I know that sounds stupid but. (Jack, 56, married)

The emotional labour of being able to successfully present the illusion of either reciprocation or genuine social interest, was contrasted with that undertaken by sex workers to protect themselves: 'They're doing a job that makes them a lot of money ... I do think they need to be a bit tough as if they develop too much of a heart while working they will succumb to emotions or will feel sorry if a guy gives them a sob story' (Leo*, 37, single). Consequently emotional labour is performed on many levels and the ability to undertake this should be seen as a significant resource. As I demonstrate below, sex workers' ability to either refuse to perform this type of labour, or be unsuccessful at it, can have implications for masculine subjectivity, an element of the commercial sex encounter which shows interactional and fluid within these settings.

Other resources men saw sex workers as in possession of, were their professional and business skills, as O'Connell Davidson (1998) draws attention to. Participants referred to the different ways the women took on business roles, such as by being an 'independent' as Oliver (61, married) explained: '[She was] completely independent. Doing it because that's what she wanted to do and

doing it for 12 years and it was business you know, to be honest to be fair. It's a business. You know she was so totally and utterly professional.' Women's marketing techniques were also mentioned:

She was extremely good at marketing. You'd go on the website and she'd say things, you know, phrases like, "Hello, welcome to such and such a place and the live action", and she'd use the language of Big Brother, you know, "Live action in the house etc, etc." She was extremely good at selling her business I thought and it became extremely popular. (Ryan, 48, long term partner)

The appearance of being professional offered a sense of security for some of the men in terms of perceived sexual health benefits:

Safe, as in health wise ... money suggests safety, the more you pay the safer it is...no disease caught yet. I know that money doesn't guarantee safety, but if the escort gives the appearance of being well organised then I feel safer, as if she knows what she's doing. (Bob, 50, married)

Bob is thus suggesting that sex workers are placed in a position of knowledge holders. Yet despite claiming that he feels safer and thus implying the sex workers' position of power in allowing him to feel safe with her knowledge. Bob also locates sexual health as the responsibility of the sex worker as found by Plumridge *et al.* (1997b) in their sample.

The above narratives suggest that the business orientation of some sex workers was a resource. However, whilst women's business skills and emotional labour

were a matter of critical assessment, the embodied nature of sex work meant that, despite a stipulation of social engagement and the ability to perform, the resource of sex workers' bodies was made explicit in the narratives:

And somebody'll say, you know, "I really like red heads", and you'll say, "Large boobs or small boobs?", something like that and eventually you'll get a picture of what they're looking for and eventually you'll think, "I saw a girl like that in such a such a place, she was really good", or you know "Avoid this one, she's a really bad attitude", or whatever.

However, as can be seen, the embodied characteristics of the sex worker were set against her ability to perform during the social interaction in terms of her 'attitude'. This is highlighted by Adam (56, married), who suggested that both embodied characteristics and attitude carry a relatively equal weighting, The sex worker, therefore, needed to draw upon multiple resources:

Read field reports on prostitutes and get some informed research done on the type of lady that you like or you know might not like and find out how they've been with other clients. Find out what their attitude is and that sort of thing and therefore, you know make a better decision than just looking at a picture of them, or reading a physical description of them.

The narratives the clients provide implicitly and explicitly set out the resources that the sex worker has access to and can thus capitalise on in order to achieve economic gain. Men's articulation of dominant discourses of both sex work and

feminine stereotypes concerning embodied characteristics, and emotional labour frame the resources accessible to sex workers. However, whilst one party has access to money and the other a sexual body, so placing them in opposition to each other, there are resources that they share in the internet, which is discussed below.

- Business and the internet

As suggested the notion that power relations within sex work are negotiated between the two parties was a dominant theme in my data. Men and women negotiated acceptable sexual practices and what parts of the sex worker's body could be accessed. However, this was not the only way that power relations were in flux. As Chapter 2 described, the role of the internet in commercial sex is now well recognised in providing information (Sharp and Earle, 2003), benchmarking client etiquette (Sanders, 2008a) and as a method of affirming, experiencing and maintaining a positive sexual identity (Katsulis, 2009). In terms of shifting power relations, the role of the internet was a significant resource amongst my sample of participants, reflecting where they visit and how they select and arrange their encounters. There were many contradictions and different understandings of the role of the internet among the men, but it did mean that power was in a constant state of flux, not static nor something held. My analysis of the role of the internet is located within a Foucauldian perspective that draws on dominant discourses of what clients want, which links back to the initial discussion of men's recognition of exploitative relationships within sex work and their rejection of these. It is argued, by

drawing on dominant discourses that are in circulation on the internet, that the sex worker and client are in varying position of Wrong's (1968) object / subject power relation.

The impact of the internet on sexual commerce is unquantifiable, as the shifts in the sex industry laid out in Chapter 2 sought to demonstrate. The internet has allowed female sex workers to streamline business and market themselves more efficiently. As Charlie (63, married) described:

[Providers] want good reviews on PunterNet and similar places and will often link to the reviews on their website. This means that girls can read reviews and know what clients are looking for, what other girls are offering, and want to get good reviews themselves.

The internet thus provides the women with a method of finding out what competing providers are offering and what clients want so they can tailor their services accordingly. In addition, free advertising and promotion can be provided by clients in an economy / industry where conventional advertising methods have to be adapted. Reviews and the experiences of other clients are thus a highly regarded source of information by prospective clients.

Furthermore, the development and management of websites by the women demonstrated the complexity of the marketing process in which sex workers sought to maximise their accessibility to and investment in the internet as a resource for achieving economic gain:

We [himself and a sex worker] did a lot about the marketing and designing the site. What is the punter looking for? How do we make the site work? You know in terms of getting the maximum number of clients. There are two things that you've got to do. One, you've got to get people there in the first place. One, you've got to get them onto the site, which means you've got to come high on the Google searches. You've got to be on listing sites ... Once you're in there, how do you make sure you turn it into them calling for an appointment? Erm, the marketing of prostitution, you see. It's all marketing and the best girls are very, very good at it. (Alan, 57, widow-dating)

This shift towards more organised and considered marketing and promotion processes influences power relations between sex workers and clients in ways that help create more balance, in terms of safety: 'The internet has made it much more accessible and in many ways safer for both the working girls and the clients' (Sebastian*, 29, single). This increased safety for female sex workers was described in detail by Ben (61, married):

Websites like SAFE which is the sexual advice end for all workers in the industry, er. It's safety as well ... You've got links to boards which give warnings, cos there are some awful people out there ... There are warning boards if any lady either in a parlour or on the street, whatever, comes across one of these people. The details are put on websites, which, the, the ladies really should access and keep in touch. They do keep in touch, they have their own network and their own private

message boards where only they have access to and the likes of me do not have access to it. They can pass private messages to one and other. So they can say you know, “Look out for this person”, “If anybody rings with this telephone number”, you know things like.

However, as Harold* (43, married) described, the internet as a resource also contributes towards inequality within the industry (in which some of its participants are already subject to pervasive forms of inequality): ‘[The internet has been more beneficial for the] higher-end of the market more than the street scene and parlour girls.’ Harold went on to explain that the internet has made escorting ‘more transparent. Entrance for providers and customers is easier, hence the industry grows ...indie-escorts, and escorts with reasonably decent agents have probably benefited from the internet: more market, more clients, more business’ (as Bernstein (2005) also found in her sample regarding sex workers’ practices). So it appears that due to the internet there are elements of increased safety and greater business opportunities for sex workers, but only for those of a certain status, and thus in a position to exercise power due to structural factors such as race and materialities such as an absence of drug addiction. It is not the internet itself, nor the individuals themselves that hold this capability, but the information contained within in it in the form of discourse. Felix* (34, single) described in detail the revolving nature of power relations between sex worker and client focusing on this notion of information and discourse in terms of field reports that clients may write. He focused on the relatively powerless position of the client, which has shifted due to the availability of field reports on the internet, yet he described how the power

relationships shifts again, with the presence of sex workers online, which can counter-act client discourse:

Review and forums give back some of the power to the punter/
consumer ... if a girl has a bad review it can affect her business ...
before internet girls could give rubbish service and get away with it.
They still do of course but here is some redress now ... prostitution is a
service industry like any other. If a hotel gets a bad rep no one will visit
and goes bust. PunterNet, etc give the chance for punter[s] to voice their
opinion. A lot of the forums have been clamped down on though, so not
as free to give opinion as before. Working girls are now active on
forums and some control them with their regular clients, cliques ...
PunterNet is not controlled by a clique anyone can post there, It's some
other forums that are more cliquey...sometimes [the girls] can write
back on the site about your post. They normally deny everything.

What Felix begins to highlight is the nature of sex workers' online presence as
a resource; a method of achieving a goal. The collective protection offered by
street sex workers when working in groups has been explored, for example,
their capacity to watch each other's backs and take down number plates of cars.
Yet as suggested by Ben above, female sex workers' engagement with the
resource of the internet has led to women having their own social networks
online for the exchange of information regarding safety, thus paralleling some
street sex workers' actions for increasing safety. Ryan (48, long term partner)

further refers to the collective presence of sex workers online, in his recollection of an (unintended) online interaction with a sex worker:

She [sex worker] accidentally sent me an invitation to a social meet and I thought “Oh, do all these people meet up in bars?” Obviously it was intended for the women and I sent her a response twice, saying “Where is the social meet, where do you all meet?” and she never responded and that struck me as being kind of typical, it is just business ...If I would have responded back saying, “Oh can I come and see you again?”, I expect that she would have got back to me straight away, but it was just cold because there was no money changing hands.

As implied above, some men who took part in my study quite clearly saw the benefit for sex workers of the introduction of the internet and some even explicitly identified the negotiated and fluid nature of power relations that this brought. However, the internet, as a resource, was described as of significant benefit for clients¹¹⁹. Again the notion of information was central to power relations, through the exchange of information between clients to assist researching which sex worker to visit. As Bob (50, married) explained, by posting questions such as, ‘does anyone know of any mature ladies in Birmingham?’, men potentially access information that will ‘decrease the chance of a bad or poor experience’. However, it was not *just* the information that the internet could provide that was seen as a benefit, it was that this ‘peer

¹¹⁹ This does not mean that the internet is any less beneficial for the women – just that this study was about clients and so most of their narratives / experiences focused on clients benefit and not the women.

review' was accessible with 'discretion' (Huw*, 47, married). The exchange of information between clients, either through direct questioning as Bob explained, or by drawing on freely available field reports, were methods of obtaining information. However, the internet as a resource allowed decisions to take place that went beyond simply the *content* of the discourse. The fact that information could be gleaned from field reports (or indeed direct questioning) with discretion and anonymity allows the internet, as a resource, to be utilised and maximised to one's own benefit.

Whilst the accessibility of discourse from other clients, or even women's own marketing material, was an essential element in perhaps initiating a decision process, the ability to interact with sex workers online shifted the power relation to incorporate the sex worker. Gareth (37, single) explained that the message boards offered the opportunity to 'Interview potential working girls I would like to see as you get a good idea of whether you would be compatible personality wise. I tend to prefer longer dinner dates than 30 minute wham bams'. He went on to explain the joint benefit to both parties: 'the growth of the internet has affected the accessibility of encounters with more women along with agencies having websites'. This suggests a mainstreaming process and increasing safety for the women, coupled with allowing clients to ensure women meet their aesthetic requirements:

Punters [get] a chance to get an idea of what the girls look like too rather than answering a paper small ad or phoning a number found in a telephone box. It has also made it more professional as working girls no

longer have to walk the streets and take risks like that. Probably more professional women are taking up escorting due to the increased safety and their having the opportunity to vet clients before meeting them?

As well as assisting in finding somebody suitable, the internet was perceived as offering an element of safety for the men in physical terms. This element of safety was an important theme, which has traditionally been associated with sex workers with a focus on women's safety and vulnerability to violence and exploitation. As well as using the internet as a method of researching 'an escort's credibility', Brad (52, single) highlighted the safety benefits of the internet, which is facilitated by the online community in which trust is generated:

It's excellent cos there's so much information about and also, er, I trust it. I'd say a good 95 percent of the people on there, it's not just the escorts the punters as well ... You're going to get a bad apple in any barrel, but generally speaking they're genuine you get these, like, reports from other people that have been to various girls and they're quite ... informative ... They're usually pretty accurate and another thing of course is safety and you know you're not going to be ripped off. It's not just for the girls, but us as well. Even though I'm a bloke we have to be careful as well, cos you don't know, you're going to some flat and they'll obviously know you're going to have money in your wallet and there might be a bloke standing behind the door ready to bang you over the head, which I'm sure must have happened.

The increased safety and opportunity to search for a satisfying experience allowed men to avoid those sex workers who were described negatively by others, thus suggesting the power of male client discourse in constricting sex workers' access to other clients and thus paralleling men's dominance of women in the employment sphere under patriarchy (Walby, 1989). Felix* (34, single) described how: 'If I had a bad experience I would want to warn people so they did not go through the same.' He went on to highlight the power of the internet as a resource available to clients, in terms of information through discourses constructed via the production of field reports about individual sex workers: 'You have PunterNet, reviews, forums, escort web sites to help ... There is a wealth of info on it on the internet. A bad review is bad for their business. If I was thinking of going to see a girl and she has a genuine bad review there is no way I will go.'

The power of field reports in relation to women's livelihood was located in discourses of consumerism. The notion that the internet places the client in a position of power is described in terms of the women providing acceptable levels of service or risking financial consequences, again placing sex workers under patriarchal scrutiny. By fusing Walby's (1989) spheres of employment and sexuality as sites of male dominance, both sex workers' sexuality and skills are judged as good enough, or not, by clients which can undermine women's earning power. Joe (56, divorced –single) explained:

From a client's point of view. Other consumer groups have similar sites for other services, so why not? It gives prospective clients some idea of

what they can expect and encourages working girls to provide good services or run the risk of getting bad field reports and subsequent loss of trade.

Ryan (48, long term partner), acknowledged that sex work can be the women's livelihoods as would be the case for any other service industry employee:

The cliché of the bored, bored hooker, who despises her clients is probably not true ... whether that's the pressure of the internet, because you know if they are like that and somebody goes and posts nasty comments on a website, that's their livelihood affected and it also means that if somebody else is managing the parlour they might be in trouble.

Through these data, the internet as a resource for both client and sex worker has been examined. By grounding the analysis in a Foucauldian perspective on discourse and power, it can be seen that both sex worker and client have varying degrees of power through using the internet and that the internet may have generated a more balanced encounter by increasing the safety for both parties. However, it has also been shown that the internet as a form of discourse can result in the containment of sex workers within patriarchal conditions of male control. However, despite drawing on Walby's (1989) structural model of power, power relations are not static and discourses can be challenged by the sex workers themselves through their own access to the internet as a resource.

- Negotiation, performance

Part of the *paradox of payment*, as Chapter 6 explored, is that despite money as a resource men prefer this aspect of the encounter to be hidden. Consequently, by exploring the negotiated aspect of power and that sex workers capitalise on the fact that they have something that men desire, (as Highleyman (1997) suggests), resources can continue to be highlighted via the intermeshing of either party's resources during negotiation. The negotiated interactional nature of power will now be explored through the notion of boundaries, as will the ambiguities of power relations in terms of performance.

In returning to the concept of boundaries, discussed in Chapter 5 in the context of identity, it can be seen that boundaries are also central to the idea of power relations. By stipulating boundaries in access to her body, time or services, the sex worker is limiting her resources. Thus the boundaries she sets separate what is, and what is not, acceptable client behaviour and practice, as O'Connell Davidson (1998) suggests. Russell (29, single) discussed the boundaries that the sex worker placed, pertaining to her body and sexual services:

It's kind of relatively easy cos it was a case of, I know I was paying for her time, but it was a case of, yeah she's probably seen this stuff half a million of times before, so it was just a case of ... I knew her boundaries, I knew what she would do, what she wouldn't do, what she kind of disliked, and liked. So it was a just a case of very open, "I want to explore this", or "I want to explore that".

Furthermore, it is not just the sex worker who has boundaries; so does the client, as implied above, in terms of what is and not acceptable with regards communication outside of the encounter. As Josh (54, married) described, boundary negotiation is more complex and can be more subtle than a simple monetary exchange for services on offer. Josh described complex power negotiations around time and how she 'lets' him stay longer on some occasions and, indeed, had renegotiated their relationship to include overnight encounters which, he suggests, she does not normally do. However, it is unclear in Josh's narrative if it is her or him who is stipulating that these overnight encounters cannot happen regularly. Josh does state that she is seeing other clients, so either she is in a position of power, charging Josh large amounts of money for encounters which she 'does with no one else', or he is in a position of power, making her shift the boundaries of what she will or will not do in the context of sexual commerce:

I see just one lady now, which's developed into a kind of a funny relationship. Erm, she's quite fond of me and I am of her. Within our, I call it 'our bubble', we have some fun. When I go for longer appointments, I book three hours and ... cos she's an independent ... she'll let me stay for sometimes a bit longer. But we have to be careful on that, cos you can't, once you start going over boundaries and things, then it becomes more like an affair and at the end of the day she's seeing other clients, er, so she's got to keep herself, keep her distance and I've not got to encroach. So we don't speak on the phone, we'll email each other, she knows a lot about me and I know quite a lot about

her ... A couple of months ago we had what we call an overnigher. She doesn't normally do those, but she did with me and she's agreed to do another one a couple of times, and partly cos it's expensive but also more than once in a while, twice a year say, again it would encroach, it's the boundaries. So it's just like a treat.

This ambiguity within the power relationship can be demonstrated further within the context of power and pleasure. The men recognised sex workers' agency and implied that sex work encounters should contain elements of respect, friendliness and some sort of reciprocity however illusory this may be, and indeed these are central for a successful encounter as Chapter 6 explained. Yet there were also narratives where the men explicitly claimed that the women control the situation. Jason (51, single) referred to the women as 'the boss', suggesting that he does what they say as they are in a position of power. Other narratives imply ambiguity, and sometimes the sex worker occupies a position of power that the client has *enabled* her to, highlighting Murphy's (2003) notion of a dialectic where power is negotiated and acted through performance. However, the sex worker is only able to undertake that performance because the client places her in that position and *lets* her exercise that power, even though she agrees to take that role through negotiation:

They are meant to be professional and therefore they know what ... makes a man come and they can control it very often ... They stop it and you enjoy it for longer periods of time ... I've always let the woman

lead to some extent. I've never really, they might ask me what I want ...
I've never said, "Right, I want it ... like that". (Adrian, 54, married)

When I go to the ladies they are in the position of power, although I've
always got the option to say, call an end to it at whatever stage, say stop
if I've had enough or that's too much. If, in a way, I've got the power to
control a situation, I let them or put them in a position of power over
me. (Edwin, 54, married)

As noted in Chapters 2, 5 and 6, the sex worker's performance of mutual
pleasure and social engagement is central to some men's accounts of
enjoyment: 'If the partner shows a lack of interest ... if I feel I haven't given ...
it's not fulfilled ... if I've not given that pleasure ... that I've received then I feel
as if I've not had a good time' (Oliver, 63, married); 'The actresses pretend to
come at exactly the same moment as I do. Well bullshit, that's not the reality ...
the actresses make a big issue of pretending to have enjoyed it ... I don't want
them pretending they've had an orgasm if they've not' (Mark, 47, married);
'That in some ways I sense that maybe she enjoys my company ... I really
recognise that I may well be deluded' (John, 40, married). These narratives thus
suggest the performance the sex worker must undertake in order to convey the
appearance of being willing and socially engaged, and of receiving pleasure.
However, the men appear to be aware of this pretence, which, if not performed
correctly, devalues their experience and invalidates their performance of a
masculine identity as Chapter 5 argued.

Through using her resources as a professional, and thus skilled sexually, socially and emotionally, and through her ability to perform such skills, the sex worker can negotiate the power relationship. However some of this may be based upon the fact that the client has *allowed* her to occupy such a position. Thus the ambiguities and complexities of the power relation between sex worker and client become apparent. However, what happens if the sex worker does not adequately perform the desired role, what happens if the illusion is not performed satisfactorily? What happens if money cannot neatly control emotions and slippages occur into the realm of female emotionality? These questions suggest that the exercise and negotiation of power can come at a cost, for both parties in terms of money, emotional fallout, and one's identity. This is where the discussion now turns.

Costs

The final layer in the model of power that I propose involves demonstrating the cost of exercising power. I aim to show that the exercise of power is not straightforwardly beneficial and in some cases may come at a significant cost. This reiterates the point that power is fluid and involves negotiation. It is not static and, continuing with a Foucauldian perspective, may be productive and a site of resistance.

Traditional feminist debates about power have denied women's power in heterosexual relations and commercial sex, suggesting that heterosexuality is simply eroticised power (Dworkin, 1993; Jeffreys 1997). There has now been a shift and female power has begun to be recognised, (Hollway, 1984;

Westwood, 2002). Throughout this thesis I have been arguing that paying for sex does not exist in isolation from non-commercial spheres, so I wish to start this analysis by exploring power in terms of men's non-commercial experiences. The participants in my sample revealed feelings of being controlled in their non-commercial sexual experiences by other women and reference was made to the fact that some women treated sex as a tool, or as I have termed, a resource to be withheld. Will* (30, single) had been involved in a problematic relationship and told me: 'She had tried to make me feel that sex was a treat and she was in control. I felt used and abused and that I'd given my heart and she'd thrown it back into my face.' This notion of sex being used to exercise control is further illustrated below:

You feel like you're going to pay for it later because, erm, you're in a relationship with somebody and they might, er, I think that when you're in a partnership with somebody, I think the sexual side of it can be manipulative sometimes. I've certainly experienced that in marriage ... being sexual with a, a partner can come with strings attached, conditions attached ... For most of my non-paid sex life I've been with women who've wanted less sex than I have. So it's felt like they've been doing me a favour, or doing it to please me ... It's about being in the hands of somebody else ... That my sex life and sexuality and my ability to be sexual is dependent upon somebody else. (Tom, 64, widow-single)

These narratives suggest that the women in these men's lives have exercised considerable agency in terms of access to their bodies and sexuality, as argued

by Mooney-Somers and Ussher's (2008) discussed in Chapter 3. By restricting sexual access, women denied men the capacity to achieve hegemonic masculine ideals of being a sexual male (Connell, 1995). This idea of being *under* control was constructed in parallel as being *unable* to control by Mark (47, married), below, which again suggests a powerful conflict with hegemonic masculinity:

How I envisage that you know, seeing prostitution, bottom line of life's analysis, a man that sees a prostitute is admitting there's an area of his life that he can't control in a way that society finds acceptable. Or that even that he finds acceptable himself. Cos most men would admit to being guilty about it. So if you can't control it and goes to see a prostitute, if the prostitutes weren't there would he still, how would he still deal with not being able to control it.

Therefore, despite being able to benefit from the patriarchal dividend, the general advantage men secure from the overall subordination of women, these men fail to adhere to a normative masculinity through their failure to live out a sexually active heterosexual identity. However, the fluid nature of power is again fundamental, because via the patriarchal dividend, expressed in men's economic privilege and the location of women in the labour market as sex workers, who undertake the *female* labour of emotionality, friendship, and assuring men of their masculine identity, these men were able to take part in sexual commerce.

The liberalization of heterosexuality (Hawkes, 1996), discussed in Chapter 6, may not have been beneficial for women as some feminists have argued

(Jeffreys, 1995). The commoditization of female bodies, and the expectations of pushing sexual boundaries, may place more pressure on women to take part in heterosexual relationships in a manner they may not wish to. However, Harold* (43, married) suggests that women utilise their body as a resource and exploit the commercialisation of their sexuality, which he sees as 'tricking' men:

Every person has a survival strategy. Successful strategies remain ... for some flirting and sex is just a tool in that strategy. A sales tool. In many industries, males are tricked into buying products from females who tout cleavage. Like it or not it works.

Thus female sexuality is interpreted as both powerful and manipulative.

This exploitation of female sexuality appeared to be problematic within some commercial sex encounters. A common theme within participants' narratives was the idea that women were able to exert control during the encounter and make it an unpleasant experience. Despite the fact that economic exchange offers the emotional safety and guaranteed access that men are attracted to in commercial sex, negative experiences in terms of control were constructed around notions of the sex worker's interest in only financial reward, thus hinting that in commercial sex there may also be a bargain and burden, as there is in non-commercial encounters, as Chapter 6 explored. This highlights the economic element of the encounter, which can lead to a cost for the men in terms of poor experiences at the hands of women occupying a position of power: 'Some prostitutes don't ... they can't hide the fact that they just want to get it over with a get your money (Jason, 51, single). Sebastian* (29, single)

described an unpleasant experience: 'As the girl was very disinterested. Made me feel like a cash machine handing out £50 notes.' Similarly for Felix* (34, single): 'She was rude, unfriendly, and didn't want to do anything for her money and rush through it.' These narratives highlight the high expectations that men have in terms of the skilled labour that the sex worker must provide. Felix went on to describe in detail how an experience could become unpleasant, highlighting the interactional nature of the power relation between him and the sex worker and the negotiated and fluid elements. He wanted to walk away, yet felt constrained not to do so:

A nasty experience would be someone who fooled you on the phone that they were nice and you go there and they were ugly or nasty in personality. They would start adding extra charges or trying to rip you off. I quite a few times walked away from appointments if I was not happy with the girl. In my early days cos I was scared I would go through with appointments I didn't really want to. I was too scared to say "no I don't want this". On one occasion I did and a male came out and threatened me to hand over the money ... If I got an inkling that a girl did not want to do it I would leave if I could. (Felix*, 34, single)

The explicit economic cost of engagement in commercial sex was highlighted by Leo* (37, single), who had spent £70,000 on sex over the last fifteen years mostly at the higher, £150-200 an hour, end of the market. For him, the economic aspect was problematic:

The ... girls ... have the upper hand and are incredible business women who also realise that they are literally sitting on a goldmine ... I would get a credit card and max it out with cash advances ... [Going] at least twice a week, spending between £150-£400. Booking hotel rooms.

This resulted in significant costs for Leo*: 'It meant that I borrowed a lot of money to support the habit, and I had to sell my house. I actually sold my house and made about £40k profit and used that to clear my credit cards and loans, there was £13k left and I spent every last penny on sex.' Leo suggests that when sex workers capitalise on their embodied resources, coupled with the resource of being business women, they are in a position of power, which for him proved to be significantly economically costly.

There were further dimensions to the cost, in terms of emotional control and fallout. Dave (56, widowed-dating) used the concept of boundaries again, saying that it is harder for clients to control emotional elements than sex workers, despite the fact that sex workers themselves stipulate clearly what is on offer. He suggests the separation of commercial and non-commercial is essential in being able to control one's emotions:

The ladies set the boundaries definitely. You've got to set your own boundaries as well, but it's, it's far more, it's far easier for men to overstep the boundaries or become too emotionally involved quite easily, er, er, through, mistaking you know, difference between sex and love I suppose. It's a sexual relationship and there is emotions involved in it. But it's, at the end of the day, you, you know you finish and you

go away and you get on with the rest of your life and then er, you come back again when you decide to arrange another meeting you know. And you enjoy it for what it is Make too big, er, issue out of it, erm, and the ladies are quite ... clear as to what you're doing and what's involved really.

In terms of emotional vulnerability then, the more men pay, the more confused they may become. There was marked evidence of confusion when the business relationship was blurred with non-commercial elements, thus posing the question of whether the women were *experiencing* pleasure or were simply skilled at *performing* pleasure. Jason (51, single) discussed his confusion when the sex worker he was visiting appeared to enjoy herself, yet wanted him to pay again:

She obviously enjoyed the sex ... I wanted to do it again with her and she wanted to make me pay again and I thought well if she enjoyed it that much [and] she couldn't stop giggling. And I thought she enjoyed it and then she wanted to make me pay 30 quid again to do it.

This was a similar feeling for Felix* (34, single): 'My buzz was to also stay with a girl way over the time agreed but not be asked to pay extra. i.e. they enjoyed it so much they didn't ask me for any more money. 'This confusion between commercial and non-commercial was mirrored in Leo's* (37, single) experiences in, which he found himself, 'Getting mixed up in the fact that I had paid them to be with me and not met them in normal situation, talking to people creates a bond (sometimes a one way bond) that you think will over spill into

normal life'. He described a specific relationship with a woman which he felt had moved beyond the commercial:

I initiated the friends bit, I would give her lifts home from work and to work, and the reason for wanting to be friends was because that was something that I couldn't buy, other guys could have sex with her but not be her friend, I only became jealous when I saw that she was chatting to other guys socially or meeting them socially.

These seepages between the commercial and non-commercial seemed to reduce the emotional protection that the power of money has offered in the beginning. This emotional vulnerability was seen to be particularly confusing and involved significant emotional management, or emotional work, on one's self (Hochschild, 1983) on the part of the men in order to remain in control of their feelings:

At the back of my mind there's always that thing of how much of this connection is her being totally professional? ... I don't want to sound cynical but you've got to have that thing at the back of your mind that says, this is commerce, this is not true love ... This is someone that has become a really good friend. But above it all, it's commerce isn't it?
(Oliver, 63, married)

For some men this emotional fallout was particularly costly, as they did get too involved and they developed strong feelings for some of the women, challenging men's ability to draw on a rational management discourse and

highlighting further men's vulnerabilities in heterosexual experiences that Chapters 3 and 6 explored:

I then started to see a local girl ... I was besotted with her, she was a huge part of my life. I would think of ways I could get money to see her, sometimes not having sex with her and hoping that she would befriend me. and she did, I actually started to run her website for her and we became 'friends' but I knew that deep down she really only needed me for the website. I even paid for the website for her. and as stupid as it sounds, if we went for a drink I would pay her the hourly rate. I knew I was an idiot but I justified it by saying to myself that I was taking her away from work. it was an unhealthy time of my life I would say.

(Leo*, 37, single)

I did have quite a few bad experiences punting but the good ones and the fact I was probably addicted to it meant I kept looking for good experiences ... I neglected proper relationships. another downside was letting myself be exposed to nasty experiences and nasty women at times... that has a long term effect... I'm glad i stopped. the psychological effects are too much...I made love with these girls, it was not just sex. if you are with a girl you really, really like and you have a great time, then your hour or so is up and you have to leave...the buzz of the meeting can turn into melancholy when you leave. the girl does like u but ultimately she is there for the money and she has her own life.

I go back to being single. I suppose I was yearning for a relationship.

(Felix*, 34, single)

As I have argued throughout this thesis, despite the fact that the commercial and non-commercial sit in opposite spheres, and that some men go to significant lengths to conceal their activities, as Chapter 5 laid out, their actual involvement in sexual commerce seeped significantly into their personal life in the way they practiced non-commercial heterosexual relations. The impact of commercial sex involvement had both negative and positive repercussions on non-commercial relationships. For some men, their involvement in paid for sex led to a reduction in effort in their non-commercial relationships as for Paul (64, married): 'Clearly it has had an effect on me in that I suppose that commercial sex is there after a while you stop trying so hard, er, otherwise.' John (40, married) describes the impact on the sexual side of the relationship with his wife:

My capacity to negotiate sex within ... the married relationship with my, my wife, has worsened ... It saddens me ...it wasn't. How, er, I live out my sexuality in my married relationship isn't, isn't what I would have imagined for myself really, it's, it's, it's disappointing, it's, er, I see it as, as, as sad really ... I mean in terms of the relationship with, with my wife it has become much more definitively non-sexual ... [that] frustrates and ... disappoints me.

For other men whilst involvement in commercial sex did not impact on their relationships, because they did not have any, it highlighted their unsuccessful sex lives and failure to meet heterosexual ideals, thus influencing how they

perceived their masculine identity, in terms of differences from others. Yet they saw how it could be fulfilled through interaction if they had a significant other:

Well as I say, it's made me more, appreciative just about what mainstream sex is. And how it potentially. I can see it being very nice with the right person. I just never found the right person. (Jason, 51, single)

It's just nice, I suppose it's, erm, it's probably something I've yearned for or it's just nice to have a Girl Friend Experience with someone and it's just nice to, er. It's just experience a girl friend. And I suppose I am thinking I wish I could have more of this. (Nick, 52, single)

These costs to exercising power and engaging in the sex industry presented further issues when men tried to leave the sex industry:

The attempts I made would be getting rid of all my numbers and research. The internet made it more difficult to give up, so many girls were getting web sites and forums and reviews were coming on the scene. My aim was always to top the last best experience. (Felix*, 34, single)

Thus despite the power that the internet seemed to offer men in terms of knowledge and obtaining the desired experience, the internet's role is paradoxical and keeps them tied to the sex industry, due to its pervasiveness and ease of accessibility. Felix, amongst others, went on to describe how he has tried to remove himself from the industry, techniques which again highlight the blurring of boundaries of paid-for sexual services and non-commercial spheres:

by way of phasing myself out of punting, I used to go for a proper massage and just hr, which was not as emotionally involving but very pleasurable. I felt that was much safer and nicer ... I am retired from full punting, but I might occasionally go for a massage and hand relief ... I go if I feel I need a release.

These narratives highlight the gendered nature of emotions and the conflicts the men faced when their own emotional control was tested. As suggested in Chapter 6, men cannot always control their emotions and on occasions slip into the world of 'female' emotionality, as described by Lupton (1998). These emotional slippages can damage men's sense of masculine identity in that they find themselves adrift from masculine norms and entering the realm of female emotionality, which challenges their ability to take part in sexual commerce in a way they so desire, highlighting their lack of power.

Widening the Gaze

The above analysis explored power relations at the micro level. However, there is implicit mention of power operating at a broader social structural level. For example, Ben's case study narrative describes the institution of marriage as constraining in terms of his sexuality. Thus to finish this chapter I wish to widen the gaze and application of my model of power to the macro level. I will first address the implicit notion of broader structures of power within previous chapters. Following on, I will apply my model of power to the state policy review of commercial sex legislation. This final discussion will again demonstrate the complexities of power relations by calling attention to the

fluidity of power in terms of time, resources and the cost of exercising power, as well as highlighting the intersections between identity, heterosexuality and power, the key analytic themes of this thesis.

It was clear within the narratives in previous chapters how certain time periods impacted on the experiences and practices of heterosexual life for participants. As Chapter 6 described, men spoke about shifts in power relations over time. For example, during the 1960s and 1970s, some participants claimed that men were the only party to take an active role in courtship rituals; however in contemporary society it appears that women are taking a more active role. Huw* (47, married) explained that nowadays 'girls are much more comfortable taking the lead'. Recognition of women's pleasure is particularly telling as Chapter 6 also documented; during their early years, many men focused on their own pleasure neglecting their female partner's needs. However, through time and as men progressed through the life course, in parallel with societal shifts, many men gained knowledge about what to do and more egalitarian sexual encounters were entered into.

This idea of knowledge allows the next layer of my model of power to be seen in terms of resources. The stories the men told me seem to suggest that men felt particularly powerless due to a lack of knowledge, as Joe described in Chapter 6 with reference to how angry he was with his lack of sex education. Despite men's greater power than women as members of an overall category, the *cost* of men's ability to exercise power appears more at an individual level. This cost comes in many forms, such as inhabiting a spoiled identity by having to pay for

sex; dissatisfaction, confusion and unhappiness within current relationships or a lack of relationships; and their lack of adherence to society's conventional heterosexual norms.

The discussion in Chapter 5 calls attention to institutionalised media discourses. As discussed, some men were able to recollect and reflect on previous perceptions of male clients before they themselves chose to pay for sex. The discussion demonstrated that the media seemed to be able to exercise significant power in promoting negative ideas about the sex industry and its participants. However, what Chapter 5 unveiled was that over time and with access to resources such as online communities, increased knowledge of commercial sex and involvement in networks with other participants, men, as clients, resisted these claims. In fact these negative images portrayed by the media appeared to strengthen group membership and ties within the collective client identity. This notion of similarity amongst some men who pay of sex becomes apparent as a desire to look after one's own interests comes into play by offering support and information sharing. Thus the cost of exercising power shows that instead of fracturing the client identity, it is instead strengthened within the group.

Alongside the role of the media, the role of the state as a macro-level power structure is also indicated in Chapter 5. As Jack (56, married) claimed the government 'would like to control our sexual behaviour'. However, as I have argued, the exercise of power is more complicated than a straightforward 'one

party holds the power' model, and applying my model reveals the complexities and fluidity of power relations at the macro level.

The power of the state to regulate sexual lives was a common theme in participants' discussion of the policy review process. Whilst it may seem that the state is the all powerful institution, what the men told me presented a more complicated picture and exploring power relations at the macro level reveals how power is exercised at local levels too. As in the earlier discussion concerning power within sexual commerce, the men offered accounts of macro-level power relations in terms of the fluidity of power over time, dependence on resources and they also articulated the cost of exercising power. In fact the three levels of my model of power were so ingrained in the men's narratives it is difficult to discuss one without the others.

In terms of time the fluidity of power is clear. The approach of previous governments and indeed historically has meant that male clients have generally been absent from legislation and instead the focus has been on women selling sex¹²⁰, as discussed in Chapter 2. However, it is clear that as time has passed there has been an increased emphasis on clients' involvement, or a turn towards 'addressing the demand'. Global social, cultural and political factors are important here, as described in Chapters 1 and 2, with increased attention to trafficking and increased radical feminist lobbying in academic and political

¹²⁰ Addressing male clients may not be a bad thing and it has been a step forward in reducing the 'blame' of sexual commerce on women. In addressing practices in sex work, as I have argued may help to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviours and reduce exploitation from clients and others' such as pimps and traffickers. However, the government's approach has subsumed all men who pay for sex under one banner of perpetrators of violence and exploitation against women.

areas in attempts to address men's absence. What becomes clear is that previously men received minimal state interference when paying for sex; however, over the last decade or so the state has sought to exercise power and constrain men's involvement in paid-for sex. How they have done this is explained below.

In interviews, there was little tangible reference to what allowed the state to exercise such extensive power over citizens. However, there was reference to laws that the state could draw upon and the consequences of breaking such laws. Tom's (64, widow-single) response to the possibility of paying for sex becoming illegal begins to reveal the power of the law and the resultant consequences:

I might just say the game's just not worth it. But on the other hand being an older guy with very much less to lose if I, if I fancied taking it up as a cause, I might do something stupid like deliberately flout the law in order to get myself arrested just to make a point you know?

Whilst Ryan (48, long term partner) explicitly told me: 'If there's a chance of getting caught, I wouldn't want a criminal record.' These men thus reveal the resources that the state, as a social structure, has in terms of ability to pass laws, enforce laws and then to deliver the consequences for those who break such Laws.

In terms of one's identity or social status constituting a resource, Oliver (63, married) describes how those actors at state level draw on the entitlements of

their particular social location, where as a man who pay for sex he inhabits the stigmatised client identity:

No punter's in a position to put his head up and say hold on a minute, this is not. ... I watched a debate on the new laws they're proposing to bring in on prostitution in other words, making it criminal to pay for sex and erm. You've got Harriet Harman saying there's 100's, over 100,000 trafficked girls working in the UK. Which is total nonsense, but because somebody is a position of authority is saying stuff like that people believe it.

Resources available to the state include being able to propose, pass and ensure laws are enforced, as well as individual members association with the state identity. However, as with the media, the men again had resources to draw upon and mobilise, suggesting the fluidity of power relations. Resources to be able to manage the exercise of power from a client perspective include money, and knowledge of where to go, especially off street or independent locations:

I think it'll have more impact on perhaps closing down more parlours and places of that kind and it might make life even more difficult for the girls on the street. But the area I'm principally involved with that of independent ladies. I don't expect it to have very much impact because I, I think it'll be almost impossible to enforce. It might reduce the amount of advertisement that can be carried on. But I suspect what will happen is that it will move into a less overt form. (Matt, 58, married)

I know where to look ... There are message boards I'm a member of I can go on them and search and find [On PunterNet] ... 50 to 60 [field reports] a day are put on and that's run from America so there's no way the British government are going to be able to close that down. (Ben, 61, married)

The men who I spoke to were adamant about the detrimental effect of passing legislation that would outlaw paying for sex, as Harold* (43, married) described: 'Look at the US: the industry doesn't go away when a law is imposed. It is just less safe. And more ppl become "victims" (in my opinion)... Outlawing it just favours the more ruthless characters: another shady market for them to exploit.' Men's narratives revealed that the cost for the state of exercising power would mean that the sex industry would become more dangerous and go underground, harder to police and more challenging for the women to operate in. This would happen in parallel with becoming a more attractive arena for criminal enterprise:

a load of bullshit. it will put more women in danger. and won't do ANYTHING to stop trafficking. trafficked women are abused in "closed" brothels, and do not work for agencies that advertise. just look at the spate of police raids lately. They all say it's to find trafficked women, AFAIK (as far as I know) not one girl has been found. (Sebastian*, 29, single)

it just drives it underground and the higher class women will always find away. Like the higher class women on the websites will advertise,

you pay the 120 pounds an hours “of my companionship but what happens inside the house is between me and you.” (Mark, 47, married)

In addition to the cost in terms of increased criminality and danger, some men spoke about less tangible aspects in relation to politics. They revealed how this demonisation of male clients strengthens men’s resolve, further alienating sex work communities and increasing resentment and mistrust between the state and her citizens. Alan (57, widow-dating) quite simply stated ‘to make consenting sex, consensual sex between adults illegal which is basically what they’re doing, strikes me as ludicrous, and I would take absolutely no notice of it.’ Other men describe a lack of respect for politicians and highlighted the inadequacy of proposed policy:

Harriet Harman and the rest of them don’t give a shit about trafficking. What they’re concerned with is promoting a fairly right wing feminist agenda that says that erm, we feminists are allowed to tell the rest of the world including all the other women, how they may or may not behave, in respect to their sexuality. ... I don’t care what she believes in is right. If she has a good case the let’s hear it and you know, [rather than the] bullshit [Harriet Harman has] stirred up cos essentially she wants to keep her name in the headlines and she has a particular view of the world which is shared by a very small minority I suspect. (Joe, 56, divorced –single)

I don’t see more erm, more funding going into, going into child day care. Erm, I don’t see any sign of a stable and sensible approach to

financing you know adult education and that sort of thing that are the drivers for it. ... I just I don't see how you can conflate it and to turn around and as is apparently happening say we are not going to listen to academic research, we're going to listen to er, faith an gut feeling, doesn't strike me as a very sensible way of making policy of any sort.

(Paul, 64, married)

This response is at a cost to the state. Instead of fostering mutually beneficial relationships between participants in the sex industry and the state, which could assist in developing acceptable and unacceptable behaviours and increased reporting of exploitation, distance is promoted. This distance is only likely to increase alienation of not only male clients, but also all those involved in sex work communities, including female sex works so increasing the possibilities for criminality.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown how the men draw on discourses associated with heterosexuality, gendered relations and commercial sex in constructing their understandings and practices within gendered relations with women. It has shown how men are aware of issues of power within commercial sex, constructing their own discourses which resemble both abolitionist and sex 'work' discourses. In doing so, some men claim to direct their involvement in the sex industry away from explicitly exploitative practices and commercial sex markets. I have put forward a three-layered model of power, the first layer referring to how power is contextual and shifts over time thus emphasising its

fluid and circulatory nature. I then demonstrate through the concept of resources how men and women in commercial sex are able to draw on the resources they have available to them. Following this I have shown that the exercise of power can come at a cost in terms of emotional fall out, a disrupted masculine identity, and a spoiled identity by virtue of being a man who pays for sex, returning to the issues discussed in Chapter 5. To conclude I have broadened the gaze of my model of power to include a discussion of macro-level power relations.

Chapter 8 – Conclusion

This thesis has contributed to knowledge about men who pay for sex by providing an empirically-based account that is located within sociological theory. In particular, its theoretical contribution utilises an overarching framework of heterosexual masculinity, a dimension of everyday life which has lacked explicit acknowledgment in much traditional *and* contemporary sex work research. Consequently, the findings have addressed omissions of previous work which, whilst insightful, are now either; outdated, fail to recognise the spectrum of the sex industry, neglect the wider social and cultural environments including intersections of commercial and non-commercial spheres, lack empirical grounding, do not reflect men's voices, and fail to acknowledge global and local social changes and how these pertain to sexual commerce and sexuality more generally. Furthermore, established research foci, such as work that focuses on violence, motivational descriptors or street markets, offer limited knowledge of the complexities of the commercial sex industry and its participants. Even progressive and contemporary work has failed to *explicitly* address men's involvement in sexual commerce in terms of inhabiting a masculine heterosexual identity within a specific cultural and social environment. As such, this thesis was never just about demographic profiles, or simplistic motivational descriptors; its overarching aim was to locate paying for sex firmly within the landscape of being a heterosexual man in contemporary society. In other words, this is a society in which the impacts of globalisation and significant change are rife, issues which, with few notable exceptions, have received scant attention.

By addressing the complexities of relationships and sexuality empirically through the use of qualitative in depth interviews, and thus presenting the findings through the voices of men who pay for sex, this thesis has; i) contributed to a growing body of research that seeks to challenge hegemonic discourse surrounding sexual commerce, discourses which locate the commercial and non-commercial in distinct spheres or claim that sexual commerce is based only on exploitation, and ii) highlighted the socio-cultural context of paid-for sex, including the relationships that male clients have with female sex workers and other women in their lives, as well as addressing shifts in sexual and social landscapes in both commercial and non-commercial contexts. In this way, it draws attention to the social and cultural milieux within which men are performing and living out their heterosexual masculinity. My call to recognise that male clients are not isolated within the commercial sex encounter and exist, as men, in non-commercial contexts, gives this thesis a dual purpose: contributing to research on the sex industry, as well as to the recent body of academic work on heterosexuality and masculinity more broadly. Thus, commercial sex was a lens through which to explore male heterosexuality.

In order to address this thesis' conclusions sufficiently and emphasise the wider contribution it makes to sociological theorising and policy debates, as well as to assert the originality of the findings, this chapter is split into four main parts. First, the empirical conclusions about male clients are highlighted thereby offering an insight into what it means to be a man who pays for sex. Second, in the context of an overarching framework of heterosexuality, I wish to

emphasise the intersections with other theoretical frameworks of masculinities, identity, transitions, emotions, friendship, intimacy and power, including the ways these intersect with one and other. Third I reflect on how this evidence can speak to policy communities. Finally, I offer suggestions for 'going forward'; in terms of additional research concerning men who pay for sex and the wider sex industry, and issues that need to be addressed within work on heterosexuality.

Sexual Commerce

In a literature which has historically had little concern for men's involvement in paid-for sex, traditional stereotypes of clients as pathologically perverse, socially inept and violent have prevailed. These assumptions deny the complex relationship men have with women both *in* and *out* of the commercial sphere. However, research has now shifted in that some work recognises the complexities of commercial sex involvement, the range of markets, and the multiplicity of participants, and their experiences and practices, as I have argued throughout this thesis. Located in and extending this nuanced and progressive research agenda, this thesis reveals the diversity of male participants' experiences and practices within both their commercial and non-commercial worlds. Yet in response to Schrock and Schwalbe's (2009) warning that focusing on diversity and plurality can mask what men have in common, I have highlighted how all the men in my sample were involved in searching for a particular masculine self, an identity confirmed through heterosexual relations.

My approach moves sex work research forward in several key ways. First it is empirically grounded in the voices of those men who pay for sex. Second, instead of focusing on only commercial sex experiences, I have broadened the gaze to include a biographical life course element to my research which highlights intersections of commercial and non-commercial spheres. This offers an insight into who these men are, and how they practice and experience heterosexual masculinity in both sexual commerce and their everyday lives. Third, my study offers an insight into paying for sex and being a heterosexual man in a period where both the sex industry and social life have undergone periods of rapid transformation. The impact of globalisation including the role of the internet in sexual commerce and the growth of a consumer based capitalist culture are thus exposed. In addition, this project has attended to other shifts in the sex industry including mainstreaming and a movement towards off street and independent sex work with more engaged and lengthy encounters. Consequently, my study contributes to knowledge about the sex industry by showing how these shifts are practiced and experienced, confirming and developing knowledge claims that some men want more than the stereotypical five minute mechanical release. Instead, as I have argued, actually some male clients may desire many aspects of non-commercial encounters to make their commercial encounter successful.

What is apparent in my data, are particular processes of identification which men who pay for sex engage in. The hegemonic discourses that are drawn upon, or resisted, in constructing themselves as similar or different to others through gendered, masculine or embodied characteristics, requiring performance and

validation, are clear. In doing so, I have called attention to the relational aspect of identity, teasing out influences from the social and cultural environment in terms of being a man in wider society, yet simultaneously one who pays for sex.. The data I presented also revealed the ability to cross boundaries during processes of identification, via the social and cultural context and resources available to the men. By emphasising the material and social resources such as the internet, social networks, and the geographic location of sexual commerce, I have demonstrated how the fluidity of identities is dependent on wider social environments within which the commercial and non-commercial are intertwined. In addressing this fluidity of identity my analysis revealed the emotional element of starting to pay for sex, an area which has received very little attention in previous research. I highlighted how the ability to negotiate and interact across the identity boundary, utilising technological developments, aids men's transition into being a male client. In addition, I have stressed the role of the internet in the boundary work that allows men to take on the collective client identity through processes of normalisation and performance. Whilst the men may inhabit a stigmatised identity, of being a 'client', they also inhabit other identities such as being a man, being a husband, or being older. My data have exposed these intersections and demonstrated the conflicts between identities and the resulting management strategies. Overall, I have argued that men who pay for sex inhabit multiple identities that are constructed in relations with others through social and cultural contexts which are in a state of flux.

As argued, relationships are at the heart of my thesis, an aspect of identity which has been neglected in much previous research on sex work.

Contemporary work, as discussed, has touched on this, incorporating notions of intimacy, emotionality and relationality, yet there has been an absence of naming men's involvement in commercial sex explicitly as a *heterosexual practice*. My wider approach has sought to make sense of men's narratives within shifting non-commercial and commercial sexual cultures. I have located my work within Hawkes' (1996) 'liberalization of heterosexuality' and within discourses of intimacy, friendship and emotionality pertaining to heterosexual experience (Allan, 1998; Jamieson, 1998; Pahl and Spencer, 2003; Walker, 1994). Thus I have attended to the shifting social and cultural contexts in which men are negotiating their relationships and heterosexual identities from before, during and throughout their engagement in sexual commerce. So, by critically examining heterosexuality, I have constructed a framework within which to understand how men experience and practice heterosexuality across the life course in both commercial and non-commercial contexts, suggesting notions of heterosexuality as involving a 'bargain', as being a 'burden', and as located in the mundane. It is through a 'rational management' discourse (Jackson and Scott, 1997), which emphasises the individual pursuit of pleasure, that men are able to make the decision to pay for sex and attempt to control their engagement. However, despite men's attraction to the 'extraordinary', which sexual commerce offers, my data revealed how elements of the everyday and the ordinary are integral to some men's satisfaction in commercial sex. So whilst the attraction of paid-for sex seems to reflect men's difficulties within

non-commercial contexts, my data reveal, in what I term a *paradox of payment*, parallels between the emotional and social processes that men engage in during commercial and non-commercial sexual involvement. Consequently, my findings challenge hegemonic discourses which insist that the commercial and the non-commercial are in opposition.

My approach to power is a step forward in the analysis of relations in sex work and gender relations in wider society. The power dynamic which links sex worker and client has been much debated by feminists as either an extreme example of oppressive gendered relations or relations in which women can exhibit significant agency. However, these debates have become somewhat stagnant and do not take into account the changing nature of sexual life and sexual commerce. Following O'Connell Davidson (1998) I have argued that power in commercial sex is complicated. I have rejected a grand theory of power to explain *everything*, instead constructing a layered model that allows the subtle ways that people negotiate power to be seen. I have argued that power in commercial sex is not held by one party; on the contrary it is *negotiated* and, like aspects of identity and relationships, it is fluid and can move across boundaries, as Foucault (1980) has argued. Whilst I acknowledged oppression and exploitation, these issues were considered in participants' reflective accounts that unveiled a more complex set of gendered power relations; ones that I have been able to illuminate through my layered model of power. I have shown that the fluidity of power is dependent on; *time*, that this movement is dependent on access to *resources* such as the internet, one's business skills or ability to perform the desired role, and that there is also a *cost*

of exercising power. Through my progressive analysis of power, I have again challenged arguments that all sex work is inherently oppressive and the ultimate signifier of male dominance. Instead my model has unveiled, how, when it is located in specific cultural contexts, the subtleties and complexities of power relations, in terms of practices and experiences, become clear. This again challenges hegemonic discourses which subsume sexual commerce under relations based on only exploitation. Furthermore, in broadening the gaze of my analysis of power relations by addressing how my model of power can be applied to broader social structures such as the state, heterosexuality and the media, I have demonstrated how my model can be applied at the macro level too. The complexities and subtleties I have illuminated must be taken into account if those interested in sex work research wish to progress in unearthing how sex workers and clients manage their involvement at micro and macro levels in the sex industry and beyond.

Heterosexuality

Despite the fact that paying for sex can be seen as a heterosexual practice and experience, located in a heterosexual identity and encompassed by the institution that is heterosexuality, the commercial sex literature has paid little attention to exploring men's involvement through heterosexual theorising. The exception to this concerns the issue of power within radical feminist theorising which discusses commercial sex in terms of the ultimate expression of men's dominance over women. Other work has addressed *some* aspects of heterosexuality including male sexuality (Sanders, 2008a, 2008b), emotions,

intimacy and friendship (Lever and Dolnick, 2000; Hart, 1998) and masculine identity (Frank, 1998, 2003; Katsulis, 2009; Martilla, 2008). However, this work only implicitly draws on heterosexuality; consequently, there is a failure to recognise men's attraction towards and involvement in commercial sex within a heterosexual context.

This oversight is interesting as paying for sex is about being a heterosexual man; what being a man should feel like, what is expected, what should be experienced, how it should be experienced, and what men feel entitled to. It is also about men's heterosexual experiences and practices (or lack of them) in the non-commercial sphere. Would it not make sense to explore such a practice in terms of heterosexuality and recognise that men who take part in paid-for sex exist as heterosexual men outside of the commercial sphere? This thesis has done just that and its starting point was acknowledging that male clients exist as heterosexual men before their involvement, during their involvement and after their involvement in sexual commerce. Consequently, data concerning their lives as men outside of sexual commerce, in terms of identity, experience and practice, are just as informative as those deriving from their experiences within the commercial sphere. My framework of heterosexuality as a 'bargain', a 'burden' and 'mundane', and how these characteristics seep between the commercial and non-commercial, helps to make sense of this.

In analysing paid for sex through the lens of being a heterosexual man, then, heterosexuality as a theoretical concept has been unpacked by drawing on the three theoretical concepts of identity, transitional relationships, and power.

Exploring these processes exposes the ways in which men (or indeed women) acquire, maintain and transition through the identities they have. What I have argued is that identity is multiple and fluid with resulting transitions across boundaries requiring resources from the wider social and cultural context that men are living in. As we have seen, identification as a heterosexual man involves cultural perceptions constructed through discourse and interaction with others about being a man and how their performance of a heterosexual masculine identity is either confirmed or rejected. This reveals the cultural formulations of masculine identity and the multiple identities that being a man in modern society can involve. Furthermore, focussing on identity offers an insight into the wider gender and sexual relations that make up modern life and how people are responding to social change and personal difficulties in contemporary capitalist culture, thus about being a man in wider society.

This reveals that the mundane and ordinary elements of heterosexual life are central to its satisfaction, so highlighting the intersection between the mundane and extreme. This informs us about the fluidity and multiplicity of heterosexuality as an experience, a practice and an identity. Furthermore, it offers a more detailed exploration of the fluidity of wider gendered power relations, rejecting hierarchical models of how power is 'held'.

Implications for Policy

I sought to explore paying for sex from a social and cultural perspective as much work has taken a deviancy or sexual health approach. Other work in contrast has explored sex work from an ideological or moralistic perspective

neglecting to include men and their voices, or, has failed to empirically ground analyses, or, has made little attempt to consider the wider context and shifts in the sex industry and wider society. Consequently much previous work has seemed to either demonise or romanticise sex work involvement predominately from a sex worker position. In addition, exploring what people do and what meanings or understandings they attach to aspects of their lives has been neglected. A social and cultural perspective allowed me to address these omissions in parallel with acknowledging shifts in the wider social environment and the commercial sex industry; an environment in which policy decisions concerning heterosexual life and commercial sex are made.

The empirical findings of my study speak to policy communities in several key ways. The shifting sexual and social landscape, in which people are living out their lives, must be recognised when considering policy alternatives. There appears to be a contradictory moral censure in some areas of sexual commerce; consider the mainstreaming of strip clubs, in contrast to attempts to constrain paid-for sex. In addition to shifts in wider sexual environments, policy makers must recognise the transformation of paid-for sex itself, especially a move towards encounters such as the girl friend experience in which non-commercial encounters are mirrored, and the role of the internet in offering safety and information. In addition, the diversity of men as clients which can be seen in the demographics of my participants, as well as their practices, must be acknowledged. Thus to subsume all commercial sex under the banner of street sex work or exploitation is naive and incorrect. Indeed my data suggests that some men do not seek out exploitation and in fact deliberately direct their

practices away from exploitative situations and locations. In addition, some men have a desire to work with agencies reporting underage or trafficked women. Once again, the technological changes due to the growth of the internet in, shaping practices, setting behavioral standards and addressing exploitation, must be recognised alongside how sex workers themselves draw on the internet as a tool to manage their own 'business' and increase safety. Furthermore, the mainstreaming of sexual commerce and the move towards more business type models needs to be addressed; some women are drawing on business skills in terms of marketing their other resources such as bodily traits and emotional labour, to generate an income. In a challenging employment market, which is set to get worse, surely measures should be taken to protect these women in their employment and business roles? Finally, policy makers must take heed of the fact that sexual commerce has grown and is now part of wider the social environment. There may be separate spaces such as online websites or geographic locations, however as my data reveals it is actually part of wider web of society and more ingrained than some would like to acknowledge.

Going Forward

- Further research – sex industry

The newer research that I have drawn upon in this thesis is only the beginning. It is essential to explore sexual commerce as part of the broader landscape of both sexual and social life. I have shown that the commercial and non-commercial do not always sit neatly in separate spheres; at times they unfold in

parallel and even leak into each other. Further research needs to address these dynamics in more detail, including the supporting cast such as taxi drivers, web masters, bar staff, cleaners, and photographers, those who are located within the wider web of sexual commerce. In terms of power, and with a movement away from established stereotypes of women on street corners with pimps, the mainstreaming of the sex industry needs to be addressed in more details. Consequently, the 'management' of the industry needs to be explored, including those women who manage themselves, those who work in brothels / saunas / parlors, those who work for agencies, amongst others from the perspective of those who manage and not focusing solely on the women as sex workers. We need an analysis that integrates men's involvement in sexual commerce, as clients, with the world of work and leisure. We need to explore beyond the actual encounter and find out about those men who, as clients, then go on to take photographs or manage websites and become further involved in sexual commerce. We need to explore those men who have the opportunity to pay for sex but do not. As I have shown, it is no longer satisfactory to devote all our attention to women who work in the sex industry; instead we need to explore all that is sexual commerce to continue to develop a nuanced understanding of its place and role in a shifting sexual culture.

- Further research – heterosexuality

So what can work on commercial sex offer to theorising heterosexuality? The relationship between the mundane and the extreme is an emergent area which has yet to be fully explored within heterosexual theorising (see Hockey *et al.*

2008). In a globalising world where the exotic and carnivalesque is increasingly accessible and more visually prominent, due to technological developments, increased mobility and growing capitalist consumerist culture, which promotes the purchase of individualised experiences, it must be explored how these developments intersect with the mundane, day to day experience of heterosexual life. Within this globalising world, the cultural aspects of heterosexual life need to be addressed more rigorously. Heterosexual relations need to be located within the social and cultural milieu within which people are living out their lives, recognising the shifting landscape of intimate life.

Debates concerning men's emotional articulacy need to be progressed. My data do show that men can be emotionally articulate and that heterosexuality is an emotional experience, whether it is in terms of friendship, frustration or intimacy. Men's emotional relationships with women need further exploration, researchers must no longer accept that men cannot or will not talk about their emotions; whilst this may be challenging this can be achieved and offers insight into men's experiences of heterosexual life. My work also draws attention to the fluidity of heterosexual power relations. This is something which needs to be looked at more closely within men's non-commercial relationships, from men's perspectives. Gendered power is more complex than hierarchical models can adequately explain and I urge prospective researchers to take this on board. Subsuming gendered power within top down approaches masks the subtle practices which both men and women take part in when negotiating gendered relations.

This project has been challenging in every aspects from meeting ethical review requirements to being accepted as a valid area of study within my own personal life, and everything that has come in between. However, as I have shown it is not acceptable to neglect to study such challenging topics. This thesis, by exploring men who pay for sex within a social and cultural framework tells us as much about their non-commercial heterosexual masculinities, as it does about their commercial sex involvement and I press for these directions to be followed by others. Research such as this thesis and other newer work which I have drawn upon is just the beginning, and following Agustin, “a wide field of study beckons” (2005: 627).

Appendix 1 – Recruitment Call – Request Posted on Online Message Board

Hi,

I am posting this message to ask for your help with a research project that I have been putting together. It focuses on male clients of female sex workers. I have spoken with Debbie and she has said it is ok for me to post a message on your site asking for help.

This research is part of my PhD in Sociology at the University of Sheffield and I want to find out how clients understand their relationships with female sex workers. The sorts of things I would like to talk to you about include;

- How would you describe your relationship(s) with the commercial sex worker(s) you visit?
- Do you have any expectations before you visit a sex worker?
- How would you describe your ideal relationship with a sex worker?
- What emotions do you tend to feel when you visit sex workers?

The purpose of my research is to generate a new and original body of information about clients' participation in commercial sex and also to help remove some of the negative stereotypes surrounding those associated with the industry. The research aims to inform a wide range of people who have an interest in commercial sex, including those working in the specific area of the commercial sex industry.

Due to the sensitive nature of the topic, I am aware that confidentiality and anonymity are crucial. Therefore, the research project will be carried out according to my professional guidelines and any identifiable data will be confidential and all participants will be anonymised to protect people's identity. Any locations and discussion of other people will also be altered to protect identities.

I am happy to answer any questions or send an information sheet out to anyone who would like to find out more about the project or taking part (contact details

at the end.) If you are over 18 years old and can help with this exciting project and would like to possibly come for an interview either face or face or over the phone, can you send me some information about; yourself, your involvement in the commercial sex industry and anything else you feel is relevant to my research. This will give me some background knowledge before meeting you in person.

I also understand that some people may be suspicious of me and my work! I am a genuine PhD student and the following link takes you to the departmental university web page where I am listed under current research students with my project title <http://www.shef.ac.uk/socstudies/research/currentstudents.html> In addition, my project is fully funded by the Economic Social Research Council and has been ethically approved by the department of sociological studies at Sheffield University.

Many thanks for taking the time to read this and please do not hesitate if you have any questions or would like further information. If you would like to contribute to my research, your help will be very much appreciated.

Many thanks

Natalie

Contact details:

Natalie. Hammond

Department of Sociological Studies,

University of Sheffield,

S10 – 2TU

Research.Hammond@sheffield.ac.uk

Participants

PhD study into stories from the kerb side¹²¹



Call girl: Actress Billie Piper as Belle de Jour



Published Date: 12 December 2007

By Martin Dawes

ACTRESS Billie Piper was on our screens recently as London call girl Belle de Jour. She's not the first working girl to tell her story - Sheffield's very own madame Charlie Daniels did that last year with her biography, *Priceless*. But what of the men who are their clients?

Sheffield graduate Natalie Hammond wants to meet them for her PhD in sociology.

"With prostitution, the women have been researched so much but I felt the men have been completely ignored," she says in a city coffee bar.

"And as they are one half of the story they should be included."

¹²¹ This is a copy of the article as it was published complete with grammatical errors amongst other mistakes!

But as there's a social stigma to admitting buying sex, isn't she going to have trouble finding them?

She believes some men who use street girls, massage parlours and call girls may be willing to tell the stories they haven't been able to confide in anyone else.

Natalie, who promises anonymity, says she's not coming to the project with preconceptions. She's already spent a year reading up on the literature but says there is little from the male point of view.

"It's full of ethical issues. I am quite neutral. I think it depends on what you are talking about.

"Some women make an awful lot of money - they have got two houses, a BMW. If that's how they choose to make their money and they are not doing it to finance a drugs habit and giving their money to a pimp, that's fine."

Natalie hopes her research will remove some of the "negative stereotypes" surrounding those in the industry.

She says: "Everybody associates prostitution with that dark and seedy thing and for some people it is. But it's ordinary men taking part in it.

"It's a hidden population, the people I'm looking at. There is not much in the research but things are starting to change."

She also wants to discover how buying sex affects men.

"I am going to look at the issue of intimacy, sex and sexuality; how commercial sex crosses over to the relationships they have in their everyday lives.

"Sex is a commodity. Everybody is embroiled in consumerism." She promises absolute confidentiality.

"The project will be carried out according to my professional guidelines and all data will be confidential and participants' identity protected."

For further information or details on how to take part in the survey write to her at Department of Sociological Studies, University of Sheffield, Elmsfield Building, Northumberland Road, Sheffield S10 2TU. Alternatively you can e-mail: research.hammond@sheffield.ac.uk

<http://www.thestar.co.uk/diary/PhD-study-into-stories-from.3575311.jp>

Appendix 3 - Further Recruitment Call - Additional Message Posted on Online Message Board

There has been an extremely positive response to my research, yet I am still in need of more participants to produce a valid study. Several people who have taken part have posted messages on this board (see above) and a different board (see link below) explaining that the process is quite harmless and the research is genuine. <http://www.punternet.com/forum/showthread.php?t=4221>

I understand that it is a sensitive topic and there may be concerns regarding confidentiality and anonymity. Therefore, there are a range of interviews that can be conducted;

- Face to face.
- Phone – I can call you or, I can give you a mobile number to call.
- Online via MSN.

Phone and online interviews can be conducted outside of office hours so have a bit more flexibility. However, face to face interviews can only be conducted between 8am and 6pm at the University of Sheffield.

The interviews themselves are flexible and if you think you do not have much spare time but would like to contribute something, a phone interview could be conducted then clarification done via email in your own time.

If you feel you can contribute in any way, your help would be greatly appreciated and you would be contributing to an extremely important and timely study.

Thank you in advance.

Regards Natalie

Appendix 4 – Information Letter Sent to Potential Participants

Information Sheet

Thank you for showing an interest in this research project. The following document contains information on why this research is being done, what participation will involve and what will happen to the information you provide. Please take time to read it carefully before you decide whether to take part or not and please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions. Thank you for your time.

The Project

This research is part of my PhD in Sociology at the University of Sheffield. I want to find out how clients understand their relationships with female sex workers by focusing on issues surrounding male sexuality and relationships. I will be asking questions about intimacy, emotions, sex and relationships, including sexual relationships, both commercial and non-commercial.

The purpose of this proposed research is to generate a new and original body of information about clients' participation in commercial sex and also to help remove some of the negative stereotypes surrounding those associated with the industry. The research aims to inform a wide range of people who have an interest in commercial sex, including those working in the specific area of the commercial sex industry.

This project is fully funded by the Economic Social Research Council. In addition, it has been ethically approved by the department of sociological studies at Sheffield University.

Participation

- Age

You must be over 18 to participate in this project

- Your Decision

Participation in this project is entirely voluntarily; therefore it is your choice to take part. If you do decide that would like to take part, you are still able to withdraw from the project at any time without giving a reason. Before the data is collected you will be asked to sign a consent form which we will both keep a copy of, or send the form back via email as a form of consent. This form will say that; you have read and understood this information sheet, that you understand taking part is voluntarily and you have the right to withdraw at any time and you understand the frameworks of confidentiality and anonymity that will be used in the project (these will be explained below.) This form will be kept in a locked filing cabinet.

- What will happen

If you choose to take part in the project, you will be invited for an interview. Interviews will either be face to face on university premises, over the telephone or using MSN. I can provide a mobile number for you to call if you wish not to disclose your own phone number. It is your decision which type of interview you prefer. The interviews are likely to last about an hour and a half, but they could be longer or shorter. They will be recorded using a digital Dictaphone. If you would like to take part but do not wish to be recorded, please discuss this with me, and I will simply take some notes of what you tell me. Before the interview, I will send you a summary of the interview guide so that you roughly know what I am aiming to find out.

- Confidentiality and Anonymity

Due to the sensitive nature of the topic under investigation I am aware that potential participants may be concerned with issues surrounding confidentiality and anonymity. Every effort to protect participant's anonymity will be made. The procedures below will be followed at all times:

- The email account being used is secure and only I have access to this.
- All data collected will be anonymised and participants will be referred to using a pseudonym in later work
- Information you give that relates to other people will also be anonymised and any identifiable features removed
- Only I will have access to the recordings and after interview they will be transferred to a computer where the files will be password protected.
- In the writing up, all identifiable features will be removed including names and identifying details and locations.
- After the research is completed, the anonymised interview transcripts will be archived in a database held by the Economic and Social Data Service. You have the option to not agreeing to your transcribed interview being archived.

There are however special circumstances when I cannot guarantee confidentiality and I will remind people of these at the start of every interview. They are as follows:

- If a participant discusses a previous illegal violent encounter such as murder, GBH, rape or abuse, that has not been reported to the police and states the name of the victim, offender or any other identifiable features explicitly, these details will be reported.

- If a participant discusses a possible illegal violent encounter that has not already happened such as murder, GBH, rape or abuse, and states the name of the victim, offender or any other identifiable features explicitly, these details will be reported.
- Explicit and identifiable details concerning trafficked persons and underage girls will be reported.

These boundaries are in place to protect people from harm. If confidentiality does have to be broken, participants will be informed.

- Disadvantages of taking part

I am fully aware that this project is exploring intimate and personal issues that may not have been told to anyone else before. So there is the possibility that the interview may be uncomfortable or traumatic for some people. Therefore, if someone becomes upset during an interview, it will be stopped temporarily and I will decide with the participant whether to carry on.

The Findings

The information collected will be used to write my PhD thesis, which will hopefully be finished in the Autumn or Winter of 2009. In addition, the anonymised data will contribute to writing articles for publication. The data collected in this project may be used in further research projects which will result in the publication of material. It is important to remember that all participants will never be identifiable in any published work.

Complaints

If in the unfortunate event any participant is unhappy with their treatment during the research or a serious event occurs after the research has taken place due to their participation and my negligence, then participants should complain in the following way. First, the complaint

should be made to me or my supervisor. If participants feel that their complaint is not handled well enough then the University's Registrar and Secretary should be contacted (contact details available upon request.)

Contact Details

Principal Researcher

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Supervisor

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Second Supervisor

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Thank you once again for taking the time to read this information and please feel free to contact me or my supervisor if you have any further questions. If you would like to take part, please send me a bit about your thoughts, involvement and experiences of the industry or anything that you think maybe relevant to or help my project.

Regards

Natalie Hammond.

Appendix 5 – Sample Questions

Interview Overview

The following document contains the headings of the 6 main parts of the interview. Beneath each heading there is an example of the types of things that may be discussed during the interview. There is a list of set areas to explore, with some very broad set questions; however the interview is flexible and you do not have to follow the order below.

Part 1 – Introduction

- Age
- Highest educational qualification

Part 2 – Your involvement in Commercial Sex

- When you started?
- Why you continued?

Part 3 – Sexual relationships

- How many sexual partners have you had outside of commercial sex?
- How would you describe your ideal sexual relationship in commercial sex?

Part 4 – Sex and Sexuality

- How did you learn about sex?
- How would you compare the sex in commercial sex with the non commercial sex that you may have had?

Part 5 – Intimacy

- Who are you intimate with?
- Have you ever been intimate with a commercial sex worker?

Part 6 – Conclusion

- Any further comments you would like to add.

Appendix 6 – Informed Consent Form

Informed consent form

Any identifiable information collected during this research project will be treated as confidential. All data will be stored anonymously and securely and everyone who takes part will be referred to by an unidentifiable pseudonym in the subsequent work. The following consent form has a series of questions that you need to answer before you participate.

I have read and understood the information sheet?

Yes No

I have been given the opportunity to ask any further questions?

Yes No

I have had any questions answered satisfactorily?

Yes No

I understand that I can withdraw from this project at any time without giving a reason?

Yes No

I understand the boundaries of confidentiality and anonymity?

Yes No

I agree to have my telephone interview recorded?

Yes No Not Applicable

I agree to have my face to face interview recorded?

Yes No Not Applicable

I agree to the information gathered being used by the principal researcher (N.Hammond) for her future research in an anonymised format?

Yes No

I agree to the transcripts¹ being archived² and used by other bona fide researchers?

Yes No

I would like to see a copy of the anonymised transcript?

Yes No

Name³:

Date:

Guidance notes for completing in the informed consent form:

¹*Transcript* refers to:

- The written answers given by you to the questions answered by email using the interview guide
- The typed notes of the content of a non recorded face to face or telephone interview
- The typed discussion of the content of a recorded face to face or telephone interview.

²*Archiving* can be understood as safeguarding and preserving your contribution after the research has been completed. Anonymised, transcribed copies of the interviews will be archived at the UK Data Archive which is held by the Economic and Social Data Service. Only bona fide researchers, such as registered academics, will be able to access them.

³*Name*. Due to the sensitive nature of this research and the concerns regarding confidentiality and anonymity, it is acknowledged that participants may not wish to sign the consent form with their name. Therefore, completing the form, dating it and sending it back via email, without your name written on it is sufficient.

If you have any further queries regarding this form, please do not hesitate to contact me at Research.Hammond@Sheffield.ac.uk

Please note – if the tick boxes are being difficult just delete as applicable.

Appendix 7 – Interview Schedule Initial

Interview Guide

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research project. Before the interview starts have you got any further questions about the project or taking part? You have returned the informed consent form is there anything you need clarifying about this? Before we begin I'd just like to remind you of the boundaries of confidentiality one last time -

Although confidentiality and anonymity have been promised, there are special circumstances when I cannot guarantee confidentiality and I will remind you of these now. They are as follows:

- discussing a previous illegal violent encounter such as murder, GBH, rape or abuse, that has not been reported to the police and stating the name of the victim, offender or any other identifiable features explicitly such as date or location, will mean these details will be reported.*
- discussing a possible illegal violent encounter that has not already happened such as murder, GBH, rape or abuse, and stating the name of the victim, offender or any other identifiable features explicitly such as date or location, will mean these details will be reported.*
- discussing explicit and identifiable details concerning trafficked persons and underage girls will mean these details will be reported.*

I'd like to check you understand what's just been said?

Now that's out of the way, let's start the interview. I have previously sent you an interview guide so you know the areas that will be discussed. The interview is made up of 6 main parts; introduction, your involvement in commercial sex, sexual relationships, sexual activity, intimacy and conclusion. There are a few

follow up questions about the actual research, but I'll talk about them at the end. However, the interview is flexible and may not stick to this set structure.

Part 1 - Introduction

- Age (range)
- Occupation
- Nationality
- Relationship status
- Number of children
- Highest educational qualification

Part 2 – Your Involvement in Commercial sex

Q. 1 Can you tell me a bit about when you first started paying for sex?

- The time in your life
- Any significant events leading up to it
- How you got involved
- What happened on your first visit?
- Who you went to see
- How you decided who to see
- The sexual services bought
- What the sex was like
- How the sex made you feel
- Why you bought these specific sexual services
- Feelings you had before going, for the first time about paying for sex
- Feelings you had after going, for the first time about paying for sex
- Why you carried on paying for sex
- How you feel about your involvement in paying for sex now

Part 3 - Sexual Relationships

Q.2 Can you tell me a bit about your sexual relationship history outside of commercial sex?

- Roughly how many sexual partners have you had?
- Approximately how many, if any, have been one night stands?
- How many, if any, have been relationships based on just sex?
- How many, if any, have been long term relationships?
- Favourite type of relationship
- Changes over time regarding how you approach you sexual relationships
- Influences on you relationships or influences on any changes that have occurred
- What makes it a sexual relationship?

Q.3 Can you tell me about the sexual relationships you have had with commercial sex workers?

- How many you have visited
- The best relationship
- The worst relationship
- Length of relationships
- The most memorable relationship
- The different types of relationships you have with different women
- Thoughts or feelings you have towards the women
- How do these compare to your sexual relationships outside of commercial sex?

Q.4 How would you describe your ideal relationship with a commercial sex worker?

- What kind of woman?
- What would be involved sexually?
- What would be involved emotionally?
- Communication
- Length of relationship
- What, if anything else would be involved?

- Expectations
- Why this is your ideal?
- Has this ever been met?
- How does this compares to your ideal sexual relationship outside of commercial sex?

Part 4 - Sexual activity and Sex

Q.5 What does actually 'being sexual' mean to you?

- Physical aspects and activities
- Emotions involved
- Worries
- Influences on your sexual activities or preferences

Q.6 How would you describe the sex you have in commercial sex encounters?

- Physical aspects and activities
- Emotions involved- before, during and after sex
- Thoughts
- Worries
- Expectations; of the act / of your self / feelings/ of the other person?
- Are your expectations met? If not how do you deal with this?
- Demands from the other person?
- Are there any differences between different sex workers
- How does commercial sex influence your sense of being masculine
- Influences on the sex you have
- Types of things that turn you on

Q.7 How would you compare this to the sex you have outside of commercial sex?

Q.8 Can you describe to me a memorable commercial sex encounter?

Q.9 Do you think there has there been any changes in the sexual activity you take part in, or your sexual preferences since your involvement in commercial sex?

- From before you got involved with commercial sex
- During your involvement in commercial sex
- Do you take things from commercial sex and incorporate them into the non commercial sexual relationships that you may have had?
- Why do you think changes have or have not occurred?
- Do you think these changes are for better or for worse?
- Have there been any changes in how you understand 'sex'?
- What is the impact on the non commercial sexual relationships that you may have had, since your involvement in commercial sex?

Part 5 - Intimate Relationships-

Q.10 Intimacy, like relationship is used in different ways and means different things for different people, such as closeness or trust. People talk about having an intimate moment or being in an intimate relationship. Can you explain what 'intimacy' means for you?

- Who would you be intimate with?
- How are you intimate?
- What emotions do you associate with being intimate?
- Are there different types of intimacy for different relationships?
- How are there different types of intimacy?
- How does intimacy develop?
- What is your ideal type of intimacy?

Q.11 Focusing on the idea of intimacy as you understand it. Do you think you have ever had an intimate moment or relationship with a commercial sex worker?

- Who was it with?
- How were you intimate?
- What made it intimate?
- Why was it intimate for you?
- What level of intimacy occurred?

- What emotions were present?
- What expectations did you have from the other person?
- How do your commercial sex relationships with different women, differ with regard to intimacy?
- If you think you have never been intimate with a commercial sex worker, was this your choice?
- In what ways was it not intimate?
- How would you compare your intimate relationships outside of commercial sex to those in commercial sex?

Part 6 - Conclusion

Q. 12 Why have you chosen to take part in this research project?

Do you have any final comments that you'd like to add about what has just been discussed?

I have a few follow up questions about your opinions regarding the interview and the research project. I am interested in these questions as there has been very little research on this subject and few sources for guidance. Therefore, any help you may be able to offer on improving future research would be valuable. I can ask these now or I can email them to you and you can answer them in your own time if you would like.

Follow up questions

Q.13 Are there any questions you found difficult to answer? Why?

Q.14 Are there any questions you thought were irrelevant? Why?

Q.15 Do you think the questions were asked / phrased in the right way? Why?

Q.16 Do you think there could be any improvements to any part of the research process?

- Recruitment
- Confidentiality / anonymity
- Information sheet
- Interviewee skills
- Questions asked

Appendix 8 – Interview Schedule Final

Interview Guide

- Thank you
- Any further questions about the project or taking part?
- Informed consent form – completed and is there anything you need clarifying about this?
- Repeat the boundaries of confidentiality one last time -

Although confidentiality and anonymity have been promised, there are special circumstances when I cannot guarantee confidentiality and I will remind you of these now. They are as follows:

- discussing a previous illegal violent encounter such as murder, GBH, rape or abuse, that has not been reported to the police and stating the name of the victim, offender or any other identifiable features explicitly such as date or location, will mean these details will be reported.
- discussing a possible illegal violent encounter that has not already happened such as murder, GBH, rape or abuse, and stating the name of the victim, offender or any other identifiable features explicitly such as date or location, will mean these details will be reported.
- discussing explicit and identifiable details concerning trafficked persons and underage girls will mean these details will be reported.

- Understand what's just been said?
- The interview is made up of 6 main parts explain in the interview guide sent via email; introduction, your involvement in commercial sex, sexual relationships, sex and sexuality, intimacy and conclusion. However, the interview is flexible and may not stick to this set structure.
- Please use the type of language that you're most comfortable with to describe your experiences.

Part 1 - Introduction

- Age (range)
- Occupation
- Nationality

- Ethnicity
- Relationship status
- Number of children
- Highest educational qualification

Part 2 – Your Involvement in Commercial sex

Q.1 A Can you tell me a bit about when you first started paying for sex?

- Main Reason?
- What time in your life or significant events?
- How you got involved? An instant or debated decision?
- What happened on your first visit?
- How the encounter /sex made you feel? Both before and after.
- Feelings you had before & after going, for the first time about paying for sex
- Why you carried on paying for sex? / What do you get from it?

Q.1 B Can you tell me a bit about your involvement now?

- Average cost, location and frequency of your visits
- How you think or feel about your involvement in paying for sex now?
- Have there been any changes in your attitude towards commercial sex?
- The best and any downsides about it for you?
- Do you have a routine with what you do before and after?
- Feelings about the arranging; thinking about it, selecting lady, arranging, meeting?
- Any experiences that stick in you mind – good/ bad/ funny/ upsetting?
- Any changes over time in how you take part – routine / location / cost?
- How do you fit it into you everyday life or keep it out with - other people / money side / making arrangements?
- Do you ever think about /are aware of the other clients? If so in what way?
- Would you say you have any form of relationship with another client? If so can you describe it?

- Do you use the websites and message boards much? If you do use them, can you describe how you use them and what for?

Part 3 - Sexual Relationships

Q.2 Can you tell me a bit about your sexual relationship history outside of commercial sex?

- How many sexual partners?
- Discuss a memorable sexual relationship
- Changes over time in your attitude towards relationships?
- Changes over time in how your relationships work?
- Are there any specific characteristics or behaviours or expectations you associate with sexual relationships?
- Emotions and feelings associated with relationships / towards partner?
- What do you think your wife's/ other family /friends attitude would be towards your involvement in the industry?
- How do you think you would feel if you found out your wife was/had been involved in the industry in anyway?

Q.3 Can you tell me about the ladies you visit in commercial sex?

- How many you have visited? For how long?
- Discuss the most memorable woman?
- Do you think of them as sexual relationships? Why?
- Thoughts or feelings you have towards the women
- How do these compare to your sexual relationships outside of commercial sex?
- How do these compare to you non sexual relationships outside of commercial sex?
- Any changes in your non commercial sexual relationships or other relationships (friends/ family) since you got involved?
- Can you tell me a bit about the other relationships you have you got in your life?
- How do these compare to sexual relationships? Similarities and differences.

Q.4 How would you describe your ideal relationship?

- In commercial sex
- In non commercial situations?
- Why this is your ideal? Has this ever been met?

Part 4 – Sex and Sexuality

Q.5 I want to talk a bit about your very early sexual experiences, prior to your involvement in commercial sex.

- How do you think you first learnt about sex?
- What's the first sexual experience you can remember?
- What did you think about sex when you were younger?
- Influences on sexual activities or preferences back then?
- Changes in you sexual experiences over time
- What does sex mean now? Emotionally and physically?
- Any changes in you attitude to sex over time? Why?
- Best and worst things about sex?

Q.6 How would you describe the sex you have in commercial sex encounters?

- Physical aspects and activities
- Emotions before, during and after sex? / Thoughts & worries?
- Expectations; of the act /your self / feelings/ the other person? / Are expectations met? If not how do you deal with this?
- Different types of sex? / Different women for different activities?
- How would you compare this to the sex you have outside of commercial sex?

Q.7 Specifically since you became involved in commercial sex, do you think there has there been any changes in; the sexual activity you take part in, your sexual preferences or attitudes?

- What type changes?
- In commercial sex or non commercial encounters?
- Why do you think changes have or have not occurred?

- Changes in how you understand / feel / think about 'sex'?
- Changes in pleasure or enjoyment

Part 5 - Intimate Relationships-

Q.8 Outside of commercial sex, do you think you've ever been intimate with anybody?

- Who / how/ emotions/ type or relationship?
- Are there different types of intimacy for different relationships?
- How are there different types of intimacy? (sexual/ friends/ family)
- How does intimacy develop?

Q.9 Focusing on the idea of intimacy as you understand it. Do you think you have ever had an intimate moment or relationship with a commercial sex worker?

- Who / how / what/ why?
- What level or type of intimacy occurred?
- What emotions were present?
- Do your commercial relationships with different women, differ regarding intimacy?
- How do you compare your intimate non commercial sexual relationships to those in commercial sex?
- If you think you have never been intimate with a commercial sex worker, was this your choice?
- In what ways was it not intimate? How do you control development of intimacy?

Part 6 – Conclusion

Q. 10 A Do you think there have been any broad cultural or general society changes in attitude towards; (If so please explain)

- Sex
- Relationships
- Commercial Sex

Q.10 B Do you think the commercial sex industry has changed much over the years? Please explain your answer.

Q. 11 A What do you think should be done about the law regarding the CS industry?

B Are there any policy changes that could improve the industry or the lives of those involved?

Q. 12 Why have you chosen to take part in this research project?

Do you have any final comments that you'd like to add about what has just been discussed? Or is there something you'd like to mention that has not been talked about?

Appendix 9 – Participant Profiles

Name:	John	Matt
Age:	40	58
Relationship Status:	Married	Married
Number of Children:	0	2
Highest Educational Qualification:	Degree Secondary education sector	Inter-Bsc (no longer exists)
Employment:	Abroad - bar / Parlour	Business Services
First Location Visited:	10 Years	Brothel
Length of Involvement:	Parlour / brothel	15 Years
Current Location:		Independent
Name:	Patrick	Jack
Age:	65	56
Relationship Status:	Divorced - single	Married
Number of Children:	2	2
Highest Educational Qualification:	A-levels	Masters
Employment:	Retired	Retired
First Location Visited:	Flat	Street
Length of Involvement:	11 Years	28 Years
Current Location:	Independent	Parlour / escorts

¹ This refers to the most *common* location the men visit now, in some cases it was hard to distinguish the difference between independent women and those working through an agency due to the fact that a lot of men used the internet and used independent to cover women who were advertising on the web. If the men made a clear distinction I have highlighted this. The men used the terms parlours and brothels interchangeably, I have reflected their own choice of language in the information provided in their biographies

Name: Mark
Age: 48
Relationship Status: Married
Number of Children: 2
Highest Educational Qualification: Masters
Employment: IT
First Location Visited: Street
Length of Involvement: 26 Years
Current Location: Independent / Trying to exit

Name: Martin
Age: 55
Relationship Status: Married
Number of Children: 3
Highest Educational Qualification: PhD
Employment: Academic
First Location Visited: Brothel
Length of Involvement: 34 years
Current Location: Independent

Name: Jason
Age: 51
Relationship Status: Single
Number of Children: 0
Highest Educational Qualification: Degree
Employment: Bakery
First Location Visited: Parlour
Length of Involvement: 19 Years
Current Location: Parlour

Name: Alan
Age: 57
Relationship Status: Widow - dating
Number of Children: 2
Highest Educational Qualification: Degree
Employment: Photographer - semi retired
First Location Visited: Independent
Length of Involvement: 2 years
Current Location: Independent

<i>Name:</i>	Ben	Oliver
<i>Age:</i>	61	63
<i>Relationship Status:</i>	Married	Married
<i>Number of Children:</i>	2	2
<i>Highest Educational Qualification:</i>	Degree	Apprenticeship
<i>Employment:</i>	Self employed business	Printer
<i>First Location Visited:</i>	Independent	Independent
<i>Length of Involvement:</i>	2 Years	1 Year
<i>Current Location:</i>	Independent	Independent

<i>Name:</i>	Tom	Charlie
<i>Age:</i>	64	60
<i>Relationship Status:</i>	Widow-single	Married
<i>Number of Children:</i>	2	2
<i>Highest Educational Qualification:</i>	Masters	PhD
<i>Employment:</i>	Social Welfare	Professional
<i>First Location Visited:</i>	Independent	Flat
<i>Length of Involvement:</i>	4 Years	11 Years
<i>Current Location:</i>	Independent	Parlour

<i>Name:</i>	Joe	<i>Name:</i>	Harold (MSN)²
<i>Age:</i>	56	<i>Age:</i>	43
<i>Relationship Status:</i>	Divorced - single	<i>Relationship Status:</i>	Married
<i>Number of Children:</i>	3	<i>Number of Children:</i>	2
<i>Highest Educational Qualification:</i>	Diploma	<i>Highest Educational Qualification:</i>	Masters
<i>Employment:</i>	IT	<i>Employment:</i>	Consultant
<i>First Location Visited:</i>	Flat	<i>First Location Visited:</i>	Independent
<i>Length of Involvement:</i>	12 Years	<i>Length of Involvement:</i>	2 Years
<i>Current Location:</i>	Independent / Agency	<i>Current Location:</i>	Independent
<i>Name:</i>	Paul³	<i>Name:</i>	Adrian
<i>Age:</i>	64	<i>Age:</i>	54
<i>Relationship Status:</i>	Married	<i>Relationship Status:</i>	Married
<i>Number of Children:</i>	1	<i>Number of Children:</i>	1
<i>Highest Educational Qualification:</i>	Professional	<i>Highest Educational Qualification:</i>	Degree
<i>Employment:</i>	Surveyor	<i>Employment:</i>	Professional
<i>First Location Visited:</i>	Independent / Agency	<i>First Location Visited:</i>	Brothel
<i>Length of Involvement:</i>	18 Years	<i>Length of Involvement:</i>	5 Years
<i>Current Location:</i>	Independent / Agency	<i>Current Location:</i>	Brothel

² Those participants with (MSN) after their name took part in MSN interviews.

³ Paul first paid for sex abroad whilst working away 30 years ago, however his interview was based on his experiences of paying for sex in the UK

<i>Name:</i>	Nick	<i>Name:</i>	Huw (MSN)
<i>Age:</i>	53	<i>Age:</i>	47
<i>Relationship Status:</i>	Single	<i>Relationship Status:</i>	Married
<i>Number of Children:</i>	0	<i>Number of Children:</i>	2
<i>Highest Educational Qualification:</i>	GCSE	<i>Highest Educational Qualification:</i>	Post Grad Diploma
<i>Employment:</i>	Gardner	<i>Employment:</i>	Publishing
<i>First Location Visited:</i>	Flat	<i>First Location Visited:</i>	Independent
<i>Length of Involvement:</i>	30 Years	<i>Length of Involvement:</i>	6 months
<i>Current Location:</i>	Independent / parlour	<i>Current Location:</i>	Independent

<i>Name:</i>	Sebastian* (MSN)	<i>Name:</i>	Tony (MSN)
<i>Age:</i>	29	<i>Age:</i>	42
<i>Relationship Status:</i>	Single	<i>Relationship Status:</i>	Married
<i>Number of Children:</i>	0	<i>Number of Children:</i>	2
<i>Highest Educational Qualification:</i>	GCSE	<i>Highest Educational Qualification:</i>	Degree
<i>Employment:</i>	Retail	<i>Employment:</i>	IT
<i>First Location Visited:</i>	Independent	<i>First Location Visited:</i>	Independent
<i>Length of Involvement:</i>	2 Years	<i>Length of Involvement:</i>	2 Years
<i>Current Location:</i>	Independent	<i>Current Location:</i>	Independent

Name: Gareth
Age: 37
Relationship Status: Single
Number of Children: 0
Highest Educational Qualification: Degree
Employment: IT
First Location Visited: Independent
Length of Involvement: 6 Months
Current Location: Independent

Name: Will (MSN)
Age: 30
Relationship Status: Single
Number of Children: 0
Highest Educational Qualification: Degree
Employment: Tele Communications
First Location Visited: Independent
Length of Involvement: 2 Years
Current Location: Independent

Name: Bob
Age: 50
Relationship Status: Married
Number of Children: 0
Highest Educational Qualification: PhD
Employment: Scientist
First Location Visited: Brothel
Length of Involvement: 20 Years
Current Location: Independent

Name: Brad
Age: 52
Relationship Status: Single
Number of Children: 0
Highest Educational Qualification: GCSE
Employment: Security
First Location Visited: Parlour
Length of Involvement: 20 Years
Current Location: Independent

<i>Name:</i>	Ryan	<i>Name:</i>	Edwin
<i>Age:</i>	48	<i>Age:</i>	54
<i>Relationship Status:</i>	Long-term partner	<i>Relationship Status:</i>	Married
<i>Number of Children:</i>	0	<i>Number of Children:</i>	4
<i>Highest Educational Qualification:</i>	Masters	<i>Highest Educational Qualification:</i>	Degree
<i>Employment:</i>	Civil Servant	<i>Employment:</i>	Public sector
<i>First Location Visited:</i>	Street	<i>First Location Visited:</i>	Independent (dominatrix)
<i>Length of Involvement:</i>	22 Years	<i>Length of Involvement:</i>	5 Years
<i>Current Location:</i>	Flats / Parlours	<i>Current Location:</i>	Independent (dominatrix)

<i>Name:</i>	Leo (MSN)	<i>Name:</i>	Josh
<i>Age:</i>	37	<i>Age:</i>	54
<i>Relationship Status:</i>	Single	<i>Relationship Status:</i>	Married
<i>Number of Children:</i>	0	<i>Number of Children:</i>	2
<i>Highest Educational Qualification:</i>	Degree	<i>Highest Educational Qualification:</i>	Professional
<i>Employment:</i>	Driver	<i>Employment:</i>	Finance
<i>First Location Visited:</i>	Street	<i>First Location Visited:</i>	Independent
<i>Length of Involvement:</i>	17 Years	<i>Length of Involvement:</i>	2 Years
<i>Current Location:</i>	Independent - trying to leave	<i>Current Location:</i>	Independent

Name:	Peter	Dave
Age:	47	56
Relationship Status:	Divorced - single	Widow - dating
Number of Children:	2	1
Highest Educational Qualification:	Degree	Degree
Employment:	Social care manager	IT
First Location Visited:	Parlour	Independent
Length of Involvement:	24 Years	4 Years
Current Location:	Parlour	No longer pays for sex
Name:	Simon	Felix (MSN)
Age:	37	33
Relationship Status:	Single	Single
Number of Children:	0	0
Highest Educational Qualification:	GCSE	Masters
Employment:	Admin	White Collar
First Location Visited:	Parlour	Flat
Length of Involvement:	20 Years	11 Years
Current Location:	Parlour	Independent - trying to leave

<i>Name:</i>	Russell	Adam
<i>Age:</i>	29	56
<i>Relationship Status:</i>	Single	Married
<i>Number of Children:</i>	0	2
<i>Highest Educational Qualification:</i>	Degree	Professional
<i>Employment:</i>	Retail	Tele communications
<i>First Location Visited:</i>	Agency	Parlour
<i>Length of Involvement:</i>	1 month	7 Years
<i>Current Location:</i>	N/A	Independent

<i>Name:</i>	Jeff⁴
<i>Age:</i>	69
<i>Relationship Status:</i>	Married
<i>Number of Children:</i>	2
<i>Highest Educational Qualification:</i>	PhD
<i>Employment:</i>	Retired
<i>First Location Visited:</i>	Independent
<i>Length of Involvement:</i>	3 Years
<i>Current Location:</i>	Independent

⁴ Jeff first paid for sex whilst working abroad many years ago, he barely spoke about this and did not see it as 'significant' and most of his interview was based on his experiences in the UK.

Appendix 10 – Coding Framework

- Top Level - Identity

Perceptions of self before paying for sex

Perceptions of industry and those involved before paying for sex

Perceptions of industry and those involved after paid for sex

Perceptions of self after paid for sex

How moved from non-client to client identity

Stigma

- Top Level - Heterosexuality and transitions

Shifts in sexual attitudes and practices cross society

Transitions in own sexual practices, experience and attitudes

Motivations for entering commercial sex

Commercial sex involvement

- Top Level - Power

Recognition of exploitation

Power resources

Sexuality

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