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Constructing the Perfect Girlfriend: Gender, Class, Race, & Performativity of Paid Intimacy in Nevada Brothels

Christina Parreira

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CONSTRUCTING THE PERFECT GIRLFRIEND: GENDER, CLASS, RACE &
PERFORMATIVITY OF PAID INTIMACY IN NEVADA BROTHELS

By

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Abstract

Constructing the Perfect Girlfriend: Gender, Class, Race & Performativity of Paid Intimacy in Nevada Brothels

by

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While most research on commodified intimacy, especially in the sex industry, has explored gender dynamics, sex work researchers are beginning to also explore intersectional dynamics in the industry. But little research has examined whether or how workers may navigate these dynamics differently through the ways in which they understand and perform service labor. Much research has explored commodified intimacy in different settings, but very little attention has been paid to the different ways that workers in the same setting perform intimacy. In this dissertation I ask how do different performances of intimate service in the brothels- the girlfriend experience (GFE) and pornstar experience (PSE)- reflect intersectional dynamics? To answer this question I conducted an ethnography in which I worked in two Nevada brothels as a participant observer and interviewed 50 workers across five brothels. I examined how the performances of GFE and PSE implicated race, gender, and class. What I found is that both performances require workers to construct an identity based upon how much emotional and/or body labor they choose to provide and these decisions and performances are infused with class, race and gendered ideologies and stereotypes. Because brothel work consists of females selling sexual services to males, most all the performances of intimacy reproduce traditional heterosexual gender and sexual norms at some level, but they do so in different ways. Girlfriend experience providers reproduce active male sexuality and passive female sexuality in their performances by distancing

themselves from the sex act and reproducing gender norms of women as prudish, nurturing and caring for male's emotional needs. By marketing and performing relationship intimacy and sex, GFE providers have a more holistic sense of self and see less of a need to fight stigma by distinguishing their work selves from their home selves. The different ways that workers perform gender are affected by the raced and classed implications of their performances, and an examination of intersectional dynamics will further our understanding of why and how different workers perform labor differently, as well as the consequences of different performances. In contrast to GFE workers, PSE workers subvert gender role norms by embracing an active sexuality, eschewing emotional labor and embracing the body labor of providing recreational sex as a "bad" girl. PSE providers draw hard boundaries between work intimacy and home intimacy, constructing a work self to differentiate from their authentic self, saving certain acts for their partner and valuing heterosexual relationship norms such as monogamy. By contrast, GFE workers define their work as labor of the mind, and define themselves against PSE providers seen as "bad girls," a conception that reflects educated middle class whiteness, and often intersectional privilege. The PSE provider's "bad girl" identity and its link to racial stereotypes of women of color as hypersexual and less valuable than "good girls" has consequences for PSE workers, who generally make less money and receive less attention from brothel management. Finally, I find that the brothels themselves reproduce intersectional systems of oppression in how these performances are valued by customers and management and management assigns workers based on their characteristics and accompanying stereotypes.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

How do workers understand, experience, and perform class, gender, race and intimacy in interactive service work, and how do their places of work reproduce intersectional inequalities? Much research on performing service work has explored the performance and experience of gender, as women disproportionately occupy interactive service jobs (Hochschild, 1983; Wharton, 1993). This is particularly true in studies of intimate labor, including sexual commerce and sex work, which have found that female workers cater to gender role norms while interacting with male clients. Recently there has been attention to intersectionality in service work, largely the intersection of race and ethnicity with gender (Kang, 2003, 2010; Sallaz, 2009), or race, class and citizenship. This has begun to be true for studies of sex work; class, racial and ethnic inequalities are magnified and include stereotypes about people of color in commercial sexual scripts (Shimizu, 2007; Parrenas, 2011; Hoang, 2011; Jones, 2015; Merla-Watson, 2017) as well as the effects of racial, ethnic and class inequalities on experiences of power, exploitation, violence, health and income. But few studies have compared differences in how intersectional inequalities may manifest themselves in different performances within the same workplace. In this dissertation I ask, how do different performances of commodified intimacy reflect intersectional dynamics, and how are these performances marketed and organized in Nevada brothels? How do sex workers understand and perform intimacy in commodified exchanges, and how are these various performances/identities gendered, classed and raced? The two performances that I will examine are the “girlfriend experience” and the “pornstar experience,” two of the most popular

services offered in the brothels. I will explore how these two performances are marketed, how workers situate gender, class, and race into their performances and how the brothels themselves reproduce inequalities in how they market themselves and how they classify the women working in them.

The girlfriend experience, or GFE, is characterized by acts such as talking, kissing, cuddling, and getting to know each other outside of a purely sexual interaction. Sex workers who offer GFE often go on dates with their clients and rely on scripts of heterosexual dating norms. The porn star experience, or PSE, is characterized by the type of wild uninhibited sex that is portrayed in pornographic films. These interactions are often shorter as they do not include time spent together outside of the bedroom (Lever & Dolnick, 2000; Sharpe & Earle, 2003).

Contribution To The Field

In our postindustrial society what do different performances of intimacy look like, and how do they reflect intersectional dynamics? Previous studies that have examined indoor sex work have rather homogenous samples, for example mostly White and middle to upper class workers providing the girlfriend experience (Bernstein, 2007; Koken, 2012). Others examine street workers, composed primarily of women of color from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Carbonero & Gómez Garrido, 2017). This dissertation has a diverse sample and also addresses racial dynamics in the brothel, which recent scholarship has neglected to do. Blithe, Wolfe, and Mohr's 2019 book about stigma in the brothels leaves out information about participant's race, although examines paths that women take after leaving the brothel (Blithe, Wolfe, & Mohr, 2019). Race and socioeconomic status would likely have an impact on the opportunities that women have after leaving the brothel, and this information would

have enriched their analysis. Read's 2013 study of one Nevada brothel examines identity construction and performance, but does not factor race into their analysis (Read, 2013). My research seeks to fill these gaps in the research, as well as compare the different ways that workers perform service work within the same context.

While there is ample research on commodified intimacy in a work setting, there is little research on how performances vary within the same or similar work setting. Scholarship on sexwork either assumes that it is all exploitation of women, or that it is actually a form of empowerment for women. Little work has examined patterns within similar work settings. By examining these different performances, I aim to understand how ideas about race, class, and gender manifest into different ways of doing sex work and the different consequences of these performances, such as how workers are valued by management and how much money they make. Using an intersectional framework to examine social class, gender and race in performance of intimacy can also lead to a deeper understanding of broader sociological concerns regarding boundary-making and intimate relationships in a market context. Finally, because the GFE involves more emotional labor and the PSE is characterized by body labor, mywork also has implications for emotional and body labor and how they are understood and differently valued in commodified intimacy and more broadly, interactive service labor.

I conducted an ethnography of five Nevada's legal brothels, in two of which I was a participant observer, and interviewed 50 sex workers. I focused on the two most commonly marketed performances of commodified intimacy in the brothels, the girlfriend experience and pornstar experience, and how workers talked about each. I also observed day to day life in the brothels, including relationships between management and workers. Nevada's legal brothels are optimal spaces to conduct this research for several reasons. First, women come to

the legal setting from a wide variety of demographic backgrounds. Second, they have the freedom to choose how to craft their services -- for example, they choose how to market services, they choose how much/how little emotional labor they want to provide. This research allows for a comparison of different services within a diverse group of female sex workers.

Research Questions

1. How do the commercialized performance of intimacy reflect and reproduce intersectional dynamics?
 - a. How do sex workers understand and perform intimacy in commodified exchanges (girlfriend experience and porn star experience)?
 - b. How are these performances/identities gendered, classed and raced in Nevada brothels?
 - i. How are these performances marketed and organized in Nevada brothels?
 - ii. How do these reflect intersectional dynamics?

Chapter Outline

In chapter one, I introduce my research questions, discuss why the topic is important and describe my contributions to the field. I ask, how do sex workers understand and perform intimacy in commodified exchanges, and how do these performances reflect intersectional dynamics? How does brothel management reproduce systems of oppression and inequality? How do workers situate their own gender, class and race identities and ideologies in relation to their performances of intimacy at work?

In chapter two, I review relevant literature covering the concepts important to this dissertation, such as intersectionality, different ways to perform service labor, including

emotional and body labor, dirty work, resistance to stigma in both interactive service work and sex work, existing literature on race, class, and gender in sex work, and finally, performances specific to the brothel. I conclude by explaining gaps in the literature that my research aims to fill.

In chapter three, I outline my methods. First, I discuss where my interest in the topic originated as well as a bit about my own history as a sex worker. I then outline my ethnographic methods, the field and access, interviews, data analysis, and ethical considerations. This chapter details how I collected data from the brothels, as well as informed consent procedures.

Chapters four through seven present my data from 50 interviews across five brothels as well as my observations and autoethnographic field notes. Chapter four discusses how the organization and marketing of the different brothels reproduce intersectional inequalities in how they view performances of work and how they assign workers to different brothels. Discourses of legal versus illegal sex work are used to either elevate or shame the sex worker.

Chapter five presents data on the most popular performance of commodified intimacy—the girlfriend experience, and how it reflects intersectional dynamics. I describe how workers define GFE, how they say they perform it, and what they say about interactions and intimacy with clients. I discuss the ways that GFE providers construct boundaries and how this process reproduces intersectional dynamics. I also analyze the relationship between age and the GFE.

Chapter six presents data on the pornstar experience and how it reflects intersectional dynamics. I describe how workers define PSE, how they say they perform it, what they say about interactions with clients, and explore intersectional implications in how they construct

boundaries. I also analyze the relationship between age and the PSE.

Chapter seven lays out my autoethnographic findings from my time as a participant observer, during which I lived and worked as a sex worker in two brothels. I define myself as a PSE provider, what that means for me, why I chose the PSE, how I constructed boundaries, and the implications that I encountered both in the brothel and academia of my intersecting identities.

Chapter eight lays out my conclusions, summarizing my methods, research questions, and findings from chapters four through seven. The chapter closes by detailing how this dissertation contributes to the literature on both interactive service work and commodified intimacy, and suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on gendered interactive service work, specifically sex work, including discussions of emotional labor, body labor, different performances of commodified intimacy, and boundary-making. This chapter also covers intersectionality as well as issues of gender, class, and race within sex work. I want to bring intersectionality into sex work scholarship to add to our understanding of commodified intimacy, including the diversity in how performances of intimacy may differ in work settings and how dynamics of race, class, and gender are reflected.

First, I will outline what it means to do intersectional research, followed by scholarship on intimacy in late modernity, which is essential for understanding the state of commodified intimacy. Next, I talk about the different forms of labor, emotional/body/dirty work, then sex work, which utilizes both mind and body labor in different performances and is considered a form of dirty work. I review the literature on racial, class, and gender issues within sex work scholarship, followed by a discussion of boundary-making in both service work and sex work to help contextualize sex work as a form of service work. The discussion of boundaries leads into one of the reasons that workers create boundaries; stigma. Finally, I describe the two most popular performances in the brothels: the girlfriend experience and the pornstar experience. I conclude with a discussion of how understanding intersectionality in different performances of sex work helps us learn more about the different ways workers can commodify intimacy and how these implicate race, gender, and class, as well as a discussion

of gaps in the research that this study aims to fill.

Intersectionality

Individuals have multiple identities, including their race, gender, and class, and people live at the intersections of overlapping systems of oppression. Intersectionality can explain how members of specific groups, such as Black women, might experience the workplace, differently depending on their race, sexual orientation, class, and other social positions (Crenshaw, 1989). Crenshaw was originally referencing Black women's experiences of oppression and how single-axis frameworks of discrimination fell short in describing the multiple levels of oppression that they faced. The intersection of racism and sexism shaped Black women's lives, and an additive approach to oppression does not capture their full experience (Crenshaw, 1989). In 1990, Patricia Hill Collins developed Black feminist thought- knowledge focused on the experiences of Black women and an acknowledgement that these experiences are unique. Up until that point, feminist analyses began with gender and "added on" other variables such as race, socioeconomic status, religion, and sexual orientation.

Collins proposed that they instead be understood as distinctive systems of oppression in relation to one another rather than as separate systems. Collins recognized that because the formation of social inequalities depend on history and culture, unequal social relations are different across time and space. Also, people in different locations of social structures have different viewpoints about their experiences of inequalities and those of others, but all of these structures are unjust, shaping knowledge that upholds the problematic status quo (Collins, 1990).

Intersectionality is a theory but also a methodology that scholars can use when

collecting sociological data. Choo & Ferree (2010) proposed different ways to theorize and practice intersectionality to widen its application in sociology by exploring institutions, power relationships, and interpersonal interactions (Choo & Ferree, 2010). They proposed looking at multiple institutions as overlapping in how they reproduce inequality, rather than as “extra” interactive processes that are secondary to the original analysis of the individual. What they describe as a “structural-type process centered analysis” examines more than how different identities interact, but also the effect that they have on each other; how gender is raced and how race is gendered (Choo & Ferree, 2010). McCall (2005) refers to this as an intercategory approach to intersectionality. The focus is not on single social groups or categories, but on the complexity of the relationships between these groups (McCall, 2005). Risman (2004) also called for the analysis of interactions and institutions in intersectionality, and proposed that we examine the dimensions of gender and other structures of inequality via three social processes: the individual level, interactional cultural expectations, and the institutional domain. These scholars’ contributions to intersectional theory help us understand the effects of the intersection of systems of oppression on the individual, but also the interplay between systems of oppression as institutions. By doing this, scholars are studying intersections rather than separate systems.

Finally, intersectionality as a methodology also requires the researcher to locate their own race, class, and gender identities in their research and what effect these identities may have on their work, including on their participants. This requires the researcher to be thoughtful and reflexive throughout the research process, taking note of how the different pieces of their identity and associated systems of oppression affect their study (Collins, 2019; Davis, 2021).

Intersectionality as a method works well in tandem with ethnography, which demands the

researcher take an inventory of their own biases and motives for research.

An intersectional framework is a useful framework for understanding how workers are affected by their position in multiple levels of stratification, typically through use of case study (Jones, 2020), as I do in this study of brothel workers. I am examining how sex workers use discourses about performances of their work and those of other workers and how these reflect gender, race, and class dynamics, as well as how organization of the brothels affect worker's experiences of systems of oppression. This is an area ripe for exploration; intersectionality is only beginning to be explored in the study of commodified intimacy (Jones, 2015; O'Neill, 2010; Moorman & Harrison, 2015).

Critiques of Intersectionality

Intersectionality has been widely adopted by academics but it is not without its critics. Critics such as Cooper (2016), Puar (2012) and May (2015) do not want to do away with intersectionality but have reimagined different ways of practicing it. Critics of intersectionality focus on the meanings of intersectional identities and their usefulness in practice. Cooper (2016) asserts that intersectionality has contributed to essentialist types of identification via the conflation of identity and power. She acknowledges that although Crenshaw originally constructed intersectionality as about power, scholars have misused it as an identity category. This misuse reifies those categories of race, class, gender, etc. Rather than focusing on identities, we must look at the structures of power that influence those identities and stop conflating the two (Cooper, 2016). May also recognizes this reification of identities, such as gender, and cautions against gender-primary theoretical premises (May, 2015). Others criticize the entire foundation of the identities and what it means to study race, class, and gender. Puar (2012) calls for the supplementation of intersectionality with Deleuze

and Guattari's theory of assemblages. Puar asserts that intersectionality has contributed to the idea that identities are fixed and stable, but that it should instead highlight movement and mobility. People are ever-changing and no identity is fixed, but rather dependent on place and situation. Assemblages, by contrast, are in perpetual motion and are fluid (Puar, 2012).

Intimacy In Late Modernity

Exploration of intersectional dynamics in commercial intimacy begins with an understanding of our culture's understanding of intimacy. Intimacy is a close relationship between two people, often both mentally and physically. Commodified intimacy is intimate labor; marriages of "convenience," care work, and sex work are a few examples of commodified intimacy (Stehle & Weber, 2020). To understand the present-day meanings of commodified intimacy in sex work, one must situate the phenomena in the culture and works of late modernity. In 1992, Anthony Giddens described how intimacy transformed as a result of globalization and capitalism, from traditional intimacy towards a post-traditional form as society headed into late-modernity. This new intimacy is grounded in self-improvement and once the relationship stops aiding the self on this journey, it is no longer of use to the individual. Society moved from romantic love to confluent love in which people can experiment with different ways of being together and are less constrained by social expectations, including gender role norms. Along with confluent love comes "plastic sexuality." Giddens coined the term plastic sexuality to refer to the consequence of disentangling Victorian notions of sex from reproduction, giving rise to the notion of sex as pleasurable. Pleasure was fragmented from reproduction, and as the 20th century progressed, notions of sex became more fluid (Giddens, 1992). Bauman (2003) also highlighted the consequences of late modernity for intimacy with "liquid love," a construct that is also a

fragmented deviation from traditional relationship norms. Bauman describes relations in a late-modern society, or a “liquid” society, as commodified, fragmented and convenient (Bauman,2003). Sex work is a convenience that thrives in late-modern society, where clients can pay for uncomplicated interactions that are both sexually and emotionally fulfilling. While these constructs examine class and economic dynamics, there is little discussion about intersectional dynamics, which may deepen our understanding of the different ways intimacy is experienced and expressed.

Interactive Service Work

Emotional Labor

Scholarship has started to explore the ways in which commodified intimacy is gendered and racialized via the study of service work. Women are overrepresented in service work jobs in which they must use emotional labor to meet the client’s needs. Hochschild developed the theory of emotional labor while conducting research on female flight attendants (Hochschild, 1983).

Standards of behavior are expected to align with management expectations; interactive service workers rely on use of emotional labor when interacting with customers (Hochschild, 1983). Interactive service work is defined as work that involves interacting with the public in which the worker’s identity is an integral part of the product being sold; the lines between worker and product are often blurred, causing the worker to use emotional labor to manipulate their identity to better fit the job description (Leidner, 1993; Erickson & Wharton, 1997).

Interactive service work is associated with traditional feminine qualities such as being a good listener, a caretaker; exemplified in jobs such as waitressing and counseling. Women in these positions are often expected to be deferential and “nice,” reinforcing

stereotypical gender role norms. The belief that women are better caretakers are built into job expectations (Pierce, 1996; Steinberg & Figart, 1999). Hall found that management scripts of “good service” in a restaurant included encouragement that female servers flirt, smile, and be aware of their emotions; women were being used as sexual objects in order to generate revenue (Hall, 1993).

Emotional labor is also racialized, as evident by Kang’s research on emotional and bodylabor practices in Korean nail salons, which is discussed in the next section (Kang, 2003). Her work found that differences in how nail technicians displayed emotional labor were dependent upon the client’s race, as well as the racialized stereotypes about themselves as immigrants.

While workers in salons where clients are predominately White must perform emotional labor to ensure the client feels pampered, Black clients in a different salon were more concerned with a show of mutual respect between cultures. And regardless of the salon, workers were immigrant women of color who were expected to be of service to their patrons, reinforcing broader systems of inequality between women (Kang, 2003). Kang’s research demonstrates some of the ways that emotional labor is racialized, which is important in understanding the experiences of interactive service workers.

Body Labor

While scholars have been studying emotional labor for several years, body labor is a newer area of research. Body labor “encompasses a range of practitioners: doctors, nurses, care-workers, alternative practitioners, hairdressers, beauticians, masseurs, sex workers, undertakers” (Twigg, 2000). It is the worker’s job to manipulate the client’s body in a way that fulfills the service (hairdressing, massage) while also helping the client to feel good

about his/herbody (Wolkowitz, 2002). This may involve carrying on conversations and even long-term relationships with clients, certainly a type of emotional labor.

Kang's research on body labor in Korean nail salons stemmed from Hochschild's original work on flight attendants and emotion labor (Kang, 2003; Hochschild, 2003). Kang argued that women who work in nail salons are performing both emotional labor and physical labor on their own and their customer's bodies. Body labor adds an important dimension to understanding emotional labor by exploring its embodied dimensions and investigating how race, class, and gender influence its performance. She did this by examining the different ways that women of different racial and class backgrounds perform body labor through use of interviews and observations. Kang concluded that while body labor is a gendered work process, it is enacted in different ways dependent upon racial, ethnic, and class influences, also making it a racialized process (Kang, 2003).

Workers also commodify their own bodies in a way that is pleasing to clients, something also observed in sex work (Read, 2013). There is overlap in the literature on body and dirty work; dealing with the body can include body fluids, designating the work as "dirty," as in the case of care work, another gendered area. This scholarship brings embodiment into the study of gendered service labor. Twigg argued for the importance of recognizing care-work as a type of body labor and also acknowledges that workers have to manage nakedness, touch, and disgust. They also perform emotional labor in caring for the clients but having to negotiate boundaries between work and their personal life (Twigg, 2000).

Dirty Work

Various forms of body labor are also understood as dirty work. Dirty work is work that

is considered tainted in some way; either morally, physically, or socially tainted (Ashford & Kreiner, 1999; Hughes, 1958). Physical taint happens when the work is thought of as dirty in a physical sense, or when it occurs under “dirty” conditions. Social taint occurs when contact with stigmatized persons, or where the worker must serve others. Moral taint occurs when the occupation is regarded as sinful, or where workers employ methods thought to be immoral.

Those who perform this labor become linked to it, personifying what is supposedly tainted and disgusting about their work. Workers craft techniques and skills to dissociate or “own” the stigma by highlighting the ability that it takes to do the job. For example, butchers and firefighters evoke masculinity and take pride in their ability to properly use dangerous knives (Meara, 1974; Tracy & Scott, 2007). Managing dirty work is part of performing gender.

In addition to being gendered, dirty work is raced. The performance of unpaid reproductive labor is a prime example of dirty work that is considered “women’s work.” Reproductive labor is domestic work such as cleaning and taking care of the children, and Marxist feminists place its gendered nature at the heart of women’s oppression. Paid reproductive labor, or service work, is the relegation of this dirty work to another, and Glenn (1992) demonstrates that relegation of this work to racial-ethnic women is a practice that has remained consistent throughout the US in the 20th century (Glenn, 1992). In the 1970s, scholars posited that there is a racial division of labor, where racial and ethnic minorities are trapped in low-wage dead-end jobs with little or no upward mobility (Blauner, 1972), with paid reproductive labor being a salient example of this. In these ways, dirty work is both gendered and raced, and these intersectional dynamics have consequences for workers.

Dirty Work and Mind/Body Dualism

Contemporary Western culture views the mind and body as distinct and separable, and

this mind/body dualism has implications for how emotional labor and body labor are valued. Work done with the mind is divorced from sex, and this mind body dualism denotes purity and class in stark contrast to labor performed by the body, which is considered dirty and lower class, because it is often performed by working-class immigrant women (Kang, 2003).

Feminist scholars have even examined the mind/body duality problem in music theory, where the music is of the mind, and the flesh of the person who performs the music is ignored because the body is devalued (Cusick, 1994). This mind/body dualism has implications for sex workers, who are performing gendered body labor, devalued as dirty work. There are ways that sex workers can resist the stigma of this dualism. Those who integrate holistic practices into their work dissolve the mind/dualism by employing caring practices in addition to work on the body. The caring and emotional elements of the mind add value to their stigmatized work (Brents & Jackson, 2013).

Sex Work, Intimacy, and Service Work

The scholarship discussed earlier in this chapter contextualizes sex work as a form of service work, but prostitution has not always been regarded as work. In the late 1970s and early 1980s during a period referred to as the “feminist sex wars,” feminists were debating a broad number of issues related to sexual behavior and sexuality including sex work. The ideological war was between sex-positive feminists and anti-porn feminists such as Andrea Dworkin and Catharine MacKinnon who wanted civil laws to restrict pornography. The anti-porn feminists rejected the idea of pornography and prostitution as labor. Sex-positive feminists argued that women in the sex industry had agency, whereas anti-porn feminists viewed them as victims of male oppression (Phipps, 2017). Carol Leigh, sex worker and activist, coined the term “sex worker” at a *Women Against Violence in Pornography and*

Media conference in 1978. In 1997, Wendy Chapkis situated sex work in service work and argued that sex workers can use emotionallabor as a tool for boundary maintenance. She argued that sex work is similar to other forms of service labor and does not necessarily lead to a loss of self (Chapkis, 1997). Later in this chapter I will draw other comparisons between sex work and service labor.

Distinctions Between Indoor and Outdoor Sex Work

The following sections discuss research on gender, race, and class in the sex industry, but given the stark racial and class differences between street and indoor workers, I will begin with an explanation of the two.

Although the term “sex worker”¹ may conjure up the image of a street walker, only a minority of full-service sex workers actually work on the streets; an estimated 10-30% in the US and the UK (Weitzer, 2005). Most sex workers work indoors and make more money, while catering to different services and having vastly different experiences than the lower-strata street sex workers. Street workers generate the lowest income while also being the most despised; a poll indicates that they are the target of the most public stigma (Weitzer, 2000). Indoor work includes sex work in massage parlors and brothels where workers have managers, and independent call girls that work without a third party. Indoor workers have more control over their environment than street workers, who have the lowest amount of control and are also the most prone to violence (Weitzer, 2009). The hierarchy is also reinforced by the workers themselves; indoor workers do not want to be associated with street workers and will disparage them in order to distance themselves (Prince, 1986; Vanwesenbeeck, 1994).

The services that street workers and indoor workers provide vary, primarily by time

and level of intimacy. Street workers take part in short interactions that center around pleasing the man's sexual desires, while indoor workers typically have lengthier interactions that also include conversation and non-sexual activities (Carbonero & Gomez Garrido, 2017). Different services require different performances from the workers. Indoor workers exert more emotional labor than street workers and are much more likely to provide guidance and emotional support to clients (Lever & Dolnick, 2000). Indoor workers have interactions with clients that can mimic dating experiences, whereas outdoor workers are performing body labor intended to serve his sexual needs and send him on his way. This is an example in which emotional labor is valued more than body labor; indoor workers charge considerably more than outdoor workers.

Interestingly, there is also a difference in the sexual pleasure that workers experience with clients. A comparison of 75 call girls, 75 street workers in California, and 150 workers in legal Nevada brothels found drastic differences in rates of reported orgasm with clients- 75% of call girls, 19% of brothel workers, and 0 street workers reported frequent orgasms with clients (Prince, 1986). A more holistic view of mind and body as well as a professionalization of their work might contribute to worker satisfaction and ability to receive pleasure. The different ways that workers understand, and express commodified intimacy contribute to differences in experiences of workers. We can draw conclusions from the class disparities between indoor providers and outdoor providers; indoor workers whose performances are characterized by emotional labor and "authentic" intimacy. This type of intimacy expressed in this performance is an expression of the White middle class. Different performances of sex work are classed in different ways, resulting in different outcomes for workers as well as different levels of financial compensation.

Sex Work as Gendered

The practice of “doing gender” in a way that caters to the hegemonic ideals of feminine beauty is a repeated theme in strip club literature. Dancers are well aware of what the “typical” male customer is interested in seeing and work to maximize their profits by embodying this feminine ideal. Trautner (2005) sought to examine how race, gender, and class influence performance of sexuality in strip clubs. She spent approximately 40 hours in the field at four different strip clubs in the Southwest US. Two of the clubs cater to a working-class and military clientele, while the other two cater to a middle and business-class clientele. Trautner noted that the dancers at the middle-class clubs conformed more to hegemonic standards of beauty than the dancers at the working-class clubs. The working-class clubs had a wider range of ages, body types, hair styles, and ethnicities, while the middle-class club employed thin, young, White women. These observations demonstrate that part of being “high class” means adhering to hegemonic standards of beauty and heteronormative norms, and dancers perform gender and class depending on the setting (Trautner, 2005).

Price had similar findings to Trautner, and argues that exotic dancers must commodify their own bodies to be pleasing to clients as an integral part of the job (Price, 2010). Some engage specifically in aesthetic body labor, modifying their bodies to meet popular standards (plastic surgery, hair extensions, manicures, dieting) to conform to hegemonic standards of female beauty in the US. They embody what it means to be attractive and feminine in the current market. This is not unlike the Vietnamese workers in Hoang’s 2015 ethnography of hostess clubs, many of whom used either lightening or darkening powder, dependent on clientele, to change their appearance, and those who appeared as feminine as possible, depending on the club (Hoang, 2015).

According to Read (2013), sex workers in a legal brothel both change their bodies and appearances to appeal to the market, but also find ways to subvert these performances of hegemonic femininity. Kate Read was surprised by the stories that she heard from sex workers during her three-day visit to a legal Nevada brothel. Far from observing the radical feminist narratives of female disempowerment and male dominance, Read learned about workers who dominate clients during fetish play. Read describes one of the dominatrixes as young-looking and non-threatening. This woman is hegemonically feminine in some respects but subverts her gender role norm by exerting control over her clients. Read also saw many women dressing themselves in tight clothing, high heels, hair extensions, and make up as a way to conform to hegemonic standards of beauty. Read's ethnographic accounts in the brothel show the gendered nature of sex work, there is also room for subversion and resistance. All of the studies in this section demonstrate the role of gender norms on performances of sex work, and also point to different ways gender can be expressed at work.

Sex Work and Race

Race is a significant predictor of where a sex worker will find themselves, working on the street or indoors. Potterat et. al (1998) documented large racial differences among sex workers; indoor full-service sex workers were more likely to be White (92%) than street workers (59%). Another study estimates that approximately one fifth of US prostitution is taking place on the street, and workers suffer many disadvantages from lack of housing and education to drug dependencies. Street workers are also overwhelmingly women of color (Porter & Bonilla, 2000; Monroe, 2005). Street sex workers are at the greatest risk of violence at the hands of pimps, clients, and police.

Differences by race also exist in indoor markets. Koken (2010) found that White

escorts charged as much as \$1000 per hour but no woman of color in the sample charged above \$500 (Koken, 2010). Cunningham & Kendall's 2017 study also found that Black escorts reported lower earnings than their White counterparts. Whiteness translates into erotic capital in the sexual marketplace (Cunningham & Kendall, 2017; Koken, 2010).

Porn exploits racial stereotypes of sexuality, on one hand proclaiming to be a liberal venture while simultaneously releasing titles such as *Black Meat* and *White Cream*, portraying Black men as animalistic, sexually aggressive, and always well-endowed. The Black man is often partnered with a White woman who is portrayed as promiscuous and deviant for having sex with a Black man (Williams, 2004). *Let Me Tell Ya 'Bout White Chicks* is a well-known pornographic video that became well known for the cliché and extreme portrayals of racial differences. In the movie, Black men speak of their desire for White women, openly saying that Black women are not as attractive or as good in bed as White women. The White women are portrayed as sexually voracious, prepared to be taken by the Black man (Williams, 2004)

Black women's bodies have been racialized and stereotyped in porn, portrayed as slaves, and always with an intense sexual appetite (Nash, 2014). Nash critiques William's 2004 article for only discussing interracial porn in terms of White women and Black men, despite the massive availability of scenes featuring Black women and White men. Nash states that Black women are entirely erased from the analysis (Nash, 2014). The sexualization of Black women in the porn industry is paradoxical; they are on one hand thought of as sexually aggressive, but they are also hidden, or often cast to the side to put the White performers in the forefront.

Miller-Young conducted a 7-year ethnography of the porn industry and spent time on filmsets, at industry events, award shows, conventions, and interviewed performers. She noted

that while at the Adult Video News expo (AVN), she heard crowd-goers call the Black performers “skanks,” and they were portrayed as hyper-sexual, but simultaneously pushed to the side and largely ignored. In her ethnography, Miller-Young examines structural inequalities and social biases of Black women in porn. She learns that Black women are hired less and also paid less than White women, approximately half to three quarters of what White performers are paid. Via one of her interviewees she learned that the average pay for a “boy/girl” scene is \$400-\$900 for a Black performer, and \$1000-\$2000 for a White performer. Black women also reported that they fear being funneled into “ghetto porn” so they made efforts to live up to White beauty standards and admit to feeling pressure to conform in order to get hired (Miller-Young, 2010).

Latinas in porn are also negatively stereotyped, portrayed as hyper-sexual, servile undocumented immigrants on a website called Border Bangers. Latina women are stuck at the border and must service patrol officials in order to get across (Merla-Watson, 2017). Asian women in porn are portrayed as hypersexual and submissive; the master and maid trope are popular tropes. Shimizu describes a porn scene where a small-framed Asian maid bows to a White man and asks him what he needs; she is very subservient (Shimizu, 2007).

Reece (2015) discusses how Black women can bypass stereotyping in the porn industry by instead working as webcam performers in which they control their image and the sexual acts they perform (Reece, 2015). Although webcam work gives Black women more control and autonomy, there is still a wage gap between Black and White women. Jones (2015) examined how racial inequalities are perpetuated in webcam modeling. Jones examined models’ cam scores, a score generated by an algorithm based on the model’s monetary success, in relation to their race. White women overrepresented models with high cam scores,

whereas Black women had much lower scores which resulted in lower placement on the website. This perpetuates the gap in wages; if a profile is harder to find on the site, it will have less viewers, generate less income, and subsequently a lower cam score. Additionally, many Black models with high cam scores modified their appearance to adhere to a White aesthetic by doing things such as chemically straightening their hair and wearing colored contact lenses. Jones classifies webcam modeling as body work and concludes that body work is racialized and gendered, and that brownbodies have less erotic capital in the sexual market (Jones, 2015).

Prostitution and pornography are not the only sectors of the industry where women of color are at a disadvantage; Brooks (2010) worked at a strip club while collecting qualitative data and found salient differences in how Black and Latina women were treated as compared to Whitewomen. Women of color are given undesirable work hours, assigned to customers known to be disrespectful, and made less money than their White counterparts. Racialized gendered stereotypes that portray Black women as hypersexual, poor, and desperate contributed to client's negative treatment of them (Brooks, 2010). This dissertation contributes to the literature on sex work and race by examining how different performances in the brothel are raced, as well as the experiences of women of color in Nevada brothels, an area of research that is underdeveloped.

Sex Work and Class

To understand how sex work is classed, one must first acknowledge that sexuality itself is classed. Bettie (2000, 2003) examines how performances of sexuality are classed in contemporary US high schools, in particular the experiences of middle class and working-class Mexican-American and White female students. She describes the “girl culture” of

Mexican-Americans (make-up, discussions of boys and dating), and saw much less of this in the middle-class prep-course groups. The Mexican girls are referred to as “las chicas.” The “preps” are White, high-achieving girls who think the chicas wear too much make-up. The chicas wear tight clothing and lots of makeup, and the White “preps” designate this as “trashy” and “cheap.” Their class as well as their racial differences are understood as sexual differences, and White middle class is likened to being refined and less sexual.

Different ways of performing sex work reflect, such as the girlfriend experience (GFE) and pornstar experience (PSE) are situated in class dynamics. According to research on indoor sex work, the GFE is the most sought-after service (Nelson, Hausbeck Korgan, Izzo & Bessen, 2020). The GFE is more than just sex; the worker typically kisses and cuddles the client, and these sessions are longer. It is characterized by extensive performance of emotional labor and a product of the middle class (Carbonero & Gómez Garrido, 2017), with longer sessions being more expensive than shorter sessions in which sex is the main focus. Additionally, a “GFE” date can feature an outing such as hiking or dinner; heterosexual scripts are used in the marketing of it, and GFE is a standard feature on brothel and escort sites around the world (Lever & Dolnick, 2000). The act of going on a date signifies class privilege; having the disposable income to go out, and shifts the focus on time spent together, rather than just the sex act.

By comparison, street sex workers are confined to quick interactions on the street or in a car, and in a comparative study, indoor escorts reported having deeper levels of emotional bonds with their clients than street workers (Lever & Dolnick, 2000). Bernstein studied this phenomenon of middle-class sex work. Her sample was comprised of predominantly white women, many formally educated, who entered into the sex industry as a means to make more

money. Bernstein's 2007 ethnography examines the relation between gender and class in her discussion of commodified intimacy as bounded authenticity. Bounded authenticity is an authentic emotional and physical connection in a temporary and emotionally bounded exchange (Bernstein, 2007). She writes about the shift between modern industrial and late-capitalist periods during which experiences marked by bounded authenticity flourished. The predominant form of sex work used to be the poor non-White street walker in marginal neighborhoods but now, sex work is largely private. A reliance on the internet and indoor sex work has brought about a new market, predominantly for White middle-class individuals. These workers are also much less likely to be targeted by police, as their class and race gives them privileges that street workers do not have (Bernstein, 2007). Bernstein's ethnography details the lives of GFE providers, giving in-depth insight into middle class sex work. However, Bernstein's work does not address how intimacy, class and gender may be differently understood and performed by individuals in the same work environment. But as with other studies, there is a pattern that shows emotional labor of indoor work as a luxury of the middle class.

Sex Work and Emotional Labor

Emotional labor is an important component of sex work, particularly the girlfriend experience. It can also be mentally exhausting for the worker; self-care is essential to preventing burn-out and pathology (Kong, 2006). In her 2005 ethnography of indoor workers in the UK, Sanders describes the process of manufacturing an identity that some workers undertake to make more profit at work. A different persona can translate into a profitable fantasy, especially for a worker who caters to the desires of the hegemonic heterosexual male and conforms to heterosexual norms of behavior (Sanders, 2005). Other research demonstrates

the importance of emotional labor in sex work. Allison's ethnography of Tokyo hostess clubs examines how these establishments create bonds between white-collar men and force a masculinity that suits their needs. Although Allison (2009) collected data from four different clubs, four factors were necessary in each club: the hostess must act "lady-like", treat the customer as a superior, offer talk as opposed to sex, and to boost the men's sense of masculinity while helping them to relax. According to Allison, the women utilize more emotional labor than if they were to just have sex, as in the Japanese pink salons. However, clients of the hostess clubs are more interested in companionship, and the women are expected to fill the spaces of silence with conversation. Similarly, to the girlfriend experience, and to other forms of interactive service labor, the women must perform emotional labor to satisfy their market (Allison, 2009).

Sex work and Body Labor

Sex work also utilizes body labor, but there are differences between sex work and other forms of body labor. Unlike massage therapy and hairdressing, sex/body work sexualizes the client, and the client touches back and thus is considered "interactive body labor" (Bretners and Jackson 2013). This is unique to sex work compared to other types of body labor. Kim Price labels stripping as a type of body labor in accordance with Kang's definition, arguing that exotic dancers must commodify their own bodies to be pleasing to clients as well as help their clients to feel good about their own bodies (Price, 2008). Not only do sex workers engage in bodily labor as part of their work, but some engage specifically in aesthetic body labor, modifying their bodies to meet popular standards (plastic surgery, hair extensions, manicure and pedicures, dieting) to conform to hegemonic standards of US beauty.

Bretners, Jackson, & Hausbeck went further and examined sex workers' experiences of

their actual body work. They interviewed 38 female sex workers in brothels all across Nevada as part of a 10-year multi-method study. They uncovered multiple dimensions of body work in prostitution, as well as three different types of practices utilized by sex workers; caring, holistic, and body practices (see also Brents and Jackson, 2013). Sex workers who emphasized bodily practices resisted the stigma of the work by highlighting the physical skill that it takes to perform sexual labor. Those who emphasized caring practices downplayed sex and highlighted the emotional labor (Brents, Jackson, & Hausbeck, 2009). However, no study to date has compared workers who provide the girlfriend experience versus performances that are more reliant on body labor, such as the pornstar experience, in the same environment. Doing so would elaborate on the ways that emotional labor and body labor are differently valued.

Sex Work and Dirty Work

Sex work has been studied via the lens of dirty work; work that is considered tainted either morally, physically, or socially (Ashford & Kreiner, 1999; Hughes, 1958). Sex workers are automatically assumed to be “bad girls” because sex work itself goes against the norms of sexual hierarchy where acceptable sex is heterosexual and monogamous (Kong, 2006). To reject “whore stigma,” the stigma associated with the selling of sex, they have to convince others that they are actually pure and deserving of respect (Pheterson, 1993). Mavin & Grandy (2013) define exotic dancing as a form of gendered dirty work and discuss the ways dancers “do gender” in order to manage their spoiled identities (Goffman, 1963) and be seen as “good girls.” The dancers construct their identities in a way that distances them from the stigma of their work, namely via displays of exaggerated femininity. Dancers play out traditional gender roles in various ways, including emotionally by being good listeners to their clients and also physically by wearing make-up and being in shape. Whereas exotic dancers perform work that

is physically tainted because of their contact with clients, phone sex operators perform work that is morally tainted, but employ similar techniques to reduce stigma (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999). Selmi's 2012 study examines the way phone sex workers sanitize their work by reframing it. Some phone sex workers label themselves as service workers, downplaying the sexual aspects of their job, which are seen as dirty. They also highlight the gendered scripts necessary to be good at their job, such as making the client feel that they are cared for (Selmi, 2012).

Management Of Boundaries and Resistance in Interactive Service Work

Research on interactive service work has examined the nexus of power between workers, clients, and managers. Leidner's seminal 1993 study of fast-food workers and insurance salespeople examines power relations between workers, clients, and managers. Although workers are involved in service in fast food, it is similar to manufacturing in that workers are taught to routinize their work, much like the routine of manufacturing production. In their scripts, workers conform but also resist (Leidner, 1993). Both Hochschild and Leidner believe that managerial strategies aimed to routinize behavior can be damaging because they restrict the worker's ability to control how they interact with clients (Leidner, 1993; Hochschild, 1983).

Employees engage in a variety of activities to challenge managerial expectations, attempting to retain their own identity and defend their sense of dignity and self-worth (Hodson, 2001). Another strategy used by call center workers is to make jokes at management's expense in order to resist their submissive role and to distance themselves from the work role (Mulholland, 2002), similarly to how some sex workers manufacture "work selves" to separate from their "authentic selves."

Paules (1991) examined resistance among waitresses. Although restaurant managers had a favored script for servers, waitresses controlled their interactions with customers outside of the scope of what management could control. Waitresses used interactive strategies that helped them to bond with customers which helped them to increase their tip earnings and to maintain their dignity as servers (Paules, 1991). Their use of emotional labor generated more income and better working conditions.

Sherman (2005, 2007) explored how class differences between low-wage workers and wealthy clients affect worker/client interactions in San Francisco luxury hotels. She found that despite the status difference, workers did not display much resentment towards the clients; they managed their feelings of discomfort via use of “boundary work” (Lamont, 2001). They are able to maintain their dignity by positioning themselves as equal or even superior to those who they serve (Sherman, 2005, 2007). The way they shape their boundaries are determined by class dynamics, similarly to boundary-making processes in sex work.

Management Of Stigma Via Boundary-Making in Sex Work

Like service workers, sex workers also use strategies of resistance to preserve their identities when dealing with difficult aspects of their work. Some sex workers draw clear distinctions between their work selves and their personal selves by describing certain body parts and acts as ‘off limits’ to clients. They do this to manage their sense of self by disassociate themselves from the stigma of prostitution (Comte, 2014; Sanders, 2005). Sanders conducted field work with indoor sex workers and identified the following as ways to help separate from the tension of selling sex: condom as psychological barrier, bodily exclusion zones (choosing to keep certain body parts reserved for one’s personal life), and preference for domination services. The majority of Sanders’ sample fakes sexual pleasure

with clients; another way to create distance between their work self and their authentic self. Through the use of manufactured identity, the workers' 'true self' is protected and kept at home for their significant other. (Comte, 2014; Sanders, 2005; Scambler, 2007).

Carbonero & Gomez Garrido (2017) conducted in-depth interviews with street workers and indoor escorts in Spain to learn how they draw boundaries between work and their personal lives. The authors concluded that both groups perform emotional labor, but they draw their boundaries differently. Escorts focus on authenticity and provide the "girlfriend experience," whereas most street workers refuse to kiss (a deal-breaker for many clients who seek the GFE) and like the workers in previously cited studies, believe in keeping a boundary between what they describe as their authentic self and their work self. Women in both groups equally stressed their "normalness," and that they are just like other women. The authors posit that this is a way to distance themselves from sex work stigma, a resistance strategy (Carbonero & Gomez Garrido, 2017).

Making Distinctions Among Sex Workers

Scholarship has examined ways in which sex workers manage stigma, but few have looked at stigma management within groups and how they do it. Sex workers face the stigma associated with the exchange of sexual services for compensation, referred to as whore stigma (Pheterson, 1993), to varying degrees. Stigma varies between sex work markets, for instance, those who provide 'full service' (intercourse) anywhere in the U.S. other than within the Nevada legal brothel system face criminalization, which both results from and causes more stigma, while exotic dancers still experience stigma, but can also claim legality as a way to distance from some stigma (Weitzer, 2018). Sex workers themselves engage in hierarchical discourses by comparing themselves to workers whose practices they deem unsavory or

unethical, often to elevate their own work and distance themselves from whore stigma. The ways in which sex workers manage stigma affects social support, relationships, and burnout. These processes make it essential to understand the different discourses that shape meaning making around stigma (Bradley, 2007; Koken, 2012; Vanwesenbeeck, 2005).

Lindemann's 2013 ethnography explored narratives concerned with health and safety used by professional dominatrices ('pro-dommes') in their effort to differentiate themselves from dommes who they deem to be unsafe, impure, and inauthentic. According to those that view themselves as 'real dommes,' their inauthentic counterparts are those that provide 'extras' to clients in the form of oral or sexual intercourse (majority of dommes do not engage in full-service sex work) and are overly aggressive with clients. The 'real dommes' labeled themselves as 'purists' and 'artists,' distinguishing themselves from the dommes they labeled as "prostitutes", and thus distancing from stigma of sex work (Lindemann, 2013). Levey & Pinsky's 2015 work also found that pro-dommes emphasize the differences between their work and prostitution as a response to sex work stigma; pro-dommes that do not have sex with clients called their full-service counter-parts 'prostitutes with whips' (Levey & Pinsky, 2015). In these instances, workers are neutralizing the potential sexual aspects of the job in an effort to 'purify' the work, just as exotic dancers who do not perform sexual favors for their clients judge those that do (Ronai & Cross, 1998). Topless dancers also judge nude dancers as 'sleazier,' while nudedancers use physical proximity as a measure of 'sleaze,' stating that they are superior to the topless dancers that have more physical contact with the audience (Ronai & Cross 1998). Full-service sex workers judge pro-dommes for seeing clients with 'weird' desires whom they feel need therapeutic treatment rather than reinforcement (Scambler & Scambler, 1997). In each of these instances, sex workers are using discourses of acceptable

sexual behavior to stigmatize one another and simultaneously neutralize their own stigma.

Structural Sex Work Stigma

In addition to facing stigma from each other, sex workers also face structural stigma. Prostitution stigma is entrenched at structural levels. The justice system discriminates against sexworkers, deeming them unworthy of protection (Benoit, Jansson, Smith & Flagg, 2018). Even in places where policies are in place to help sex workers rather than police them, sex workers are denied citizenship rights by virtue of their occupation. Their neighborhood residents viewed them as “risky” and police quickly took action to remove sex workers from these neighborhoods(Krusi, Taylor, Rhodes & Shannon, 2016). Sex workers face difficulties securing housing and even in custody battles with their own children because of their chosen occupation. Sex workersare reluctant to use health services because of the stigma, and disclosing their status as a sex worker may result in a lower standard of care (Benoit, Jansson, Smith & Flagg, 2018).

Examining the ways that sex workers manage stigma leads to better understanding of consequences of stigma such as burn out, and boundary maintenance.

Performances In Sex Work

There are many ways that sex workers can perform sex with their clients, ranging from sessions where sex is the central feature to sessions where sex is a very small part of the interaction. Workers vary the extent to which they perform emotional or body labor, how long they spend with clients, what they are willing to do with clients, and how they construct boundaries. Much research has explored commercialized intimacy and across particular settings, but little attention to diversity in how performances of intimacy may differ amongst workers within the same or similar work settings. Little research has examined how

intersectional theory can help us understand performances of intimacy. Two of the most common performances are the girlfriend experience and pornstar experience.

The Girlfriend Experience

According to research on sex-buyers, the GFE is the most popular performance. The GFE is more than body labor; it involves kissing, cuddling, and other markers of authentic intimacy as experienced between two lovers outside of a commodified setting. Workers perform extensive emotional labor as part of the GFE, often going on dates, spending time outside of the bedroom, and even having overnight sessions (Carbonero & Gómez Garrido, 2017; Smith, 2017). Heterosexual scripts are utilized in marketing of the GFE, and it is a very common offering in brothels and by independent escorts (Lever & Dolnick, 2000). “Girlfriend experiences occur whenever the woman is enthusiastic about the sex act and makes the john feel special, as though they were in a ‘consensual non-commercial relationship (Sharpe & Earle, 2003).”

The GFE and Consumer Expectations

Much of the research on the girlfriend experience is on client expectations and experiences using methods such as netography and in-depth interviews. Huff (2011) used both methods to examine client experiences with GFE, finding that men expect emotional intimacy in the encounter as well as reciprocal pleasure. Clients are the happiest when they forget that they paid for the interaction (Huff, 2011). An analysis of client message boards in 10 US cities showed very similar findings; those clients feel a successful GFE experience is one in which the provider helps them forget that they paid (Holt & Blevins, 2007), as does Pettinger in her 2011 online review of Punternet; another client message board/review site. Pettinger also found that men want an erotic performance of the worker’s sexual pleasure, and an

unenthusiastic session could lead to a bad review. The “punters” say that they do like when the women make it obvious that they are at work, and boundaries are viewed as unprofessional (Pettinger, 2011).

The Porn Star Experience

Compared to the wealth of research on the girlfriend experience, research on the alternate “porn star experience” is sparse. Huff describes the porn star experience (PSE) as a service that focuses only on the male’s sexual pleasure, and also characterizes it as wilder than the GFE (Huff, 2011). Other research on clients describes the PSE as an encounter in which the provider performs stereotyped behavior that is commonly found in pornographic films (Horswill & Weitzer, 2018). Liotzis describes the PSE as a “surprisingly satisfying experience of passionate and wild sex that exceeds the johns’ expectations” (Liotzis, 2014). In Nelson, Hausbeck Korgan, Izzo, and Bessen’s 2020 study of independent sex workers who advertised online, PSE was described as a session during which the provider may engage in acts seen in pornography that they may not offer in a typical session, often for a higher rate. For one of their informants, a PSE session could include spanking whereas a typical session would not (Nelson, Hausbeck Korgan, Izzo, Bessen, 2020). While the GFE is a popular topic of discussion on client message boards, the PSE is hardly mentioned.

Conclusions

This literature review ties together issues of gendered interactive service work and intersectionality, laying the foundation for my study by describing previous scholarship as well as gaps in the literature. While there is a wealth of research on commodified intimacy in a work setting, there is little research on how performances vary within a workplace.

Different scholarship either assumes that commodified intimacy is all gender exploitation, or

all empowering. Even those who espouse a polymorphous paradigm do not look at patterns within work settings. By drawing on intersectional theories, I can analyze how performances of intimacy are different and what causes these differences.

This research adds to the scholarship on gendered service work in several ways. Studying different performances help inform us how ideas about race, class, and gender manifest into different ways of doing sex work, and how workers construct their work self. And these different ways of doing sex work have different consequences for workers, such as how workers are valued by management and clients, their financial success, and their understanding of intimacy.

Finally, this dissertation analyzes race and class in the Nevada brothels in ways that others have not, adding to the scholarship on sex work.

Chapter 3

Research Methods

Introduction

I have been drawn to the sex industry since I discovered it, around the age of 12 in the late 1990s. My parents always kept a copy of the yellow pages (an annual telephone directory of businesses and advertisements) in the house, and my father would also bring home the local newspaper. I would pretend to read the comics while I caught glimpses of the escort advertisements in small print in the back of the paper. The yellow pages also had advertisements for women offering a “good time.” I was confused as to how they were allowed to advertise in the paper; even then I knew there was something taboo about it.

The first thing I did when I turned 18 years old was go to a strip club. I told one of the dancers that it was my birthday, and she pulled me on stage with her. I was surprisingly comfortable and let her strip me to my underwear while she spanked me on stage. At 19, I was obsessed with the HBO show, *Cathouse*, a reality series about a legal Nevada brothel. Despite the stigma of sex work, these women were bold enough to be on television. I envied them, feeling a mix of jealousy and intense curiosity. I began googling the Nevada brothels and looking at all their websites as well as the women working in them. I would look at their social media pages, fascinated at how they marketed themselves. It all seemed very glamorous, yet the photos of the brothels showed trailers in the middle of the desert. Some looked appealing while others looked like abandoned trailers in the middle of nowhere. I wondered who these women were and why were they working in such remote locations? How did they market themselves to attract clients to the brothels? How did they draw boundaries between their

home lives and work, and did they enjoy the sex with clients? I continued to search online and used Facebook to befriend some of the sex workers. I was very much a voyeur, wanting to learn more about a world that I never considered being a part of. A few years passed and the idea of studying brothels was exciting but far removed from my reality. I was pursuing a degree in clinical psychology in Connecticut and working at a bar part-time.

By 2009 I was tired of working long hours in bars and restaurants while simultaneously interning 20 or more hours a week for free as part of my master's degree. My cousin told me about "webcam girls," women who perform live sexual acts for money on the internet. Almost immediately I became a webcam girl, quit the bar business, and never looked back. Earning \$100-400/night on a webcam in fewer hours from home was the change I desperately needed. The webcam felt safe, work done in the privacy of my home without any physical contact with clients. I never forgot about the Nevada brothels, and now that I was in the industry, I was even more interested in the lives and experiences of Nevada brothel workers. In 2011 I came across the book *State of Sex: Tourism, Sex, and Sin in the New American Heartland* (Brents, Jackson & Hausbeck, 2009). I developed an obsession with the brothels that drove me to drop out of a doctoral program in clinical psychology to move across the country in hopes of studying them. When I arrived in Las Vegas I came out as a sex worker, something I could have never done while living in Connecticut and working at an Ivy League research hospital. I had never even planned to go to Nevada when I lived in Connecticut; I never thought I would actually step foot in a brothel. Now I was less than 90 miles away and visited my first brothel in the winter of 2014. I was curious about the everyday lives of the workers and how they managed their personal lives in relation to their work; what did intimacy mean to them and what was it like to have sex with strangers? How

did different workers manage the stigma of prostitution? I wondered if they constructed boundaries at work and if so, how? I also wondered if there were different ways that workers marketed themselves and who profited the most and why? I chose ethnography as my methodology so that I could understand the answers to these questions from the worker's vantage point while viewing life inside the brothel. It was important for me to listen, but also to observe.

To explore the ways that different intimate services in the brothel are understood and performed by workers, as well as how these performances reflect intersectional dynamics, I conducted an ethnographic study of Nevada brothels, including interviews with 50 women in five brothels, observation in five brothels, and participant observation in two of the brothels.

The Field

Prostitution remains criminalized in every US state except for Nevada, where brothels are legal in 12 of 18 counties. There are currently 19 brothels open in Nevada, housing anywhere from three to 25 workers at a time: two in White Pine County, one in Storey County, three in Nye County, one in Mineral County, four in Lyon County, one in Lander County, and seven in Elko County. Brothels are reflective of the libertarian values of the old west, and sustained now as part of a booming tourist economy (Brents, Jackson & Hausbeck, 2009). During World Wars I and II many brothels closed as a result of government pressure and fear that sex workers were spreading disease to the armed forces stationed in Nevada. After WWII, the brothels re-opened but were soon declared a public nuisance by the Supreme Court in 1949. The decision as to whether brothels would be shut down came down to county ordinances, and brothels were pushed out of the gaming towns. In 1971, a law was passed that would ban brothels from opening in counties with populations over 250,000. Today the

population cut-off has risen to 700,000, but while the brothels have been legal for over 50 years, working girls still face challenges such as restrictions on mobility if they want to work in the brothel. Some brothels function on a 'lock-down system,' not allowing the worker to leave unless she is off-duty and during an approved time permitted by management. In Storey County, sex workers are not allowed to go into town unless accompanied by a chaperone, and in Wells, workers have a strictly enforced 5 PM curfew. Most counties have laws regarding how much time a sex worker can spend outside of the brothel before she must be re-tested for sexually transmitted infections (Blithe, Wolfe, & Mohr, 2019).

The first brothel that I interviewed workers in and also conducted participant observation was Bettie's Cathouse in rural Nevada. For clarification, Bettie's Cathouse is a pseudonym; all locations, brothel names, owner names, and worker names are pseudonyms to protect the privacy of my participants. Bettie's Cathouse, like most brothels, was more than an hour away from any large city, with nothing but a gas station and small convenience store near it for miles. It's a fairly large light pink house, long and narrow with a small stone walkway and patio out front. Aside from the neon sign that flashes "Adult Entertainment Inside, Live Girls, Brothel," there is nothing sexual or enticing about the exterior. All of the windows are blacked out so that potential clients and visitors cannot see inside the establishment. Anyone who is curious about what lies beyond the front door of the brothel has to ring the doorbell and come face to face with a protective "house mom," or shift manager.

Access

I was met with a stern welcome when I first rang the doorbell of the Bettie's Cathouse, knowing even then to ring twice to signify that I was not a client. Friends and family members are instructed to ring twice so that the workers do not rush to a "line up" for a

potential client. When the doorbell rings once, the house mom sounds a bell, which signals to the workers that a potential client is at the door. Workers rush to the parlor and literally line up, standing side by side, and introduce themselves to the client one at a time. The client then chooses a worker to give him a tour of the brothel, which ends with negotiations over price and sexual acts in the worker's room. After ringing the bell twice, my friend Page and I explained that we were just curious to see the house and asked if it would be alright to sit at the bar for a drink. Her demeanor immediately softened as she welcomed us in, alerting the girls to not bother with line-up. After settling at the bar and chatting with the house mom for a few minutes, I explained that I was a researcher interested in the experiences of women in brothels and was hoping to live there for a week over spring break. I had also stopped by and sat at the bar at the Rooster Ranch, and was waiting to hear back on a contact there.

Essentially, I was looking for a house that would allow me to live there without having to work as a sex worker. At Bettie's Cathouse management urged me to work there instead, to get the "full experience" for my research. Rooster Ranch seemed willing to let me live there without having to work, as journalists had done in the past, but with Bettie's Cathouse it was a firm no. I would need to work. I was drawn to the Cathouse. The fact that it's the smallest brothel in the area intrigued me, and I loved the burlesque theme. I knew that I could not spend any real time there without working there, and although I could probably do it at Rooster Ranch, did I want to? I began to consider the benefits of being a participant observer, rather than just an observer. This would give my data a depth and breadth unlike previous studies and give me an unprecedented level of access.

Despite my initial reservations about the stigma of working in a brothel, I felt that the house mom was right; the most effective way to gain access and trust of the women I

hoped to interview was to work alongside them. Rather than continuing to visit brothels to find one in which I could just live and not work, I decided to use participant observation so that I could share what my participants were experiencing and gain their trust while creating a new vantagepoint in sex work research. I started work as a legal full-service sex worker at the start of 2014.

My research is based on interviews, participant observation, and autoethnographic self-reflection. I worked as much as I could that first year, then sporadically every few months in 2015, and mostly by appointment only from spring 2015 to New Year's Eve 2017, when I saw my last client.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Participant Observation

I had to weigh the advantages of participant observation against the fact that I would be taking on the stigma of prostitution. I worried about how future employers would perceive me but realized that if they judged me for being a sex worker, they would make for a poor fit anyway. I was already open about being a webcam model, so to some extent I would have to face sex worker stigma in my future regardless of whether or not I worked in the brothel. I thought about what I wanted out of my future. I wanted a career in which I could advocate for the rights of sex workers and be respected as both an academic and a sex worker, regardless of the type of sex worker. I also envisioned an environment in which future bosses and work colleagues understood ethnography and respected my choice to work there in order to collect novel data. I saw it as something to be proud of, and ultimately, I would want to be surrounded by people who view it in the same light. These goals allowed me to come to terms with potential losses I may encounter as a result of becoming a full-service sex worker; the benefits outweighed the risks.

Ethnography and Autoethnography

Ethnography is a qualitative methodology adopted by sociologists that emerged from anthropology. The objective is to study the beliefs, interactions, and behaviors of small cultures via participation and observation of the field (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Ethnographers collect unstructured accounts from their participants and their environment and then interpret the meanings, taking care to be reflexive and aware of their own biases as they do so. Reflexivity is essential because interpretations are tied to the lived experience of the researcher. However, early ethnography of the 19th century was primarily conducted by outsiders who were providing their views about the group, rather than representing the point of view of those being studied. In the early 1990s Malinowski created a shift in ethnography, introducing data from the point of view of his subjects by immersing himself in their everyday lives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The goal of ethnography is to provide meaning to the symbols and interactions of the group and to understand what was previously “hidden.” To do this, ethnography relies on various means to collect data, such as interviews, field notes, and analyzing artifacts from the field. Ethnography is fluid and flexible, meaning that the process changes as data is collected. For example, one might add or remove questions from the interview after noticing emerging patterns. The researcher changes and adapts to their setting, taking care to not disrupt it while still meaningfully engaging in it (Naidoo, 2012).

Auto-ethnography is a type of ethnography in which one’s own experiences serve as data for analysis. Crawley (2012) discusses auto-ethnography as a form of “self-interview,” turning the lens on herself and her experiences to theorize about sociological issues. She reflects on how she became so “butch” and on her lesbian identity, using herself as the subject of inquiry.

Crawley writes “As such, autoethnography offers one view of the embodiment of social location that other methods lack: a direct line from the analyst to the member, unobstructed by the Schutzian problem of conveying language out loud (Crawley, 2012).” This problem that she refers to is the Schutzian problem of consciousness; can humans ever share consciousness? (Schutz, 1970). In autoethnography, one person shares their experiences as data, using self observation and reflexive investigation as both participant and scholar (Ellis & Berger, 2003; Bochner & Ellis, 1999).

Participant Observation

Bettie’s Cathouse, like many of the rural brothels, is smaller, housing one to five workers, and generally draws a working-class clientele, including truckers, miners, and highway travelers (Brents, Jackson, Hausbeck, 2009). In the first six months of the study, I made five trips to the Cathouse and spent a total of 36 days living and working as a legal sex worker; much of my data was collected during this period. My stays ranged anywhere from four to 12 days, averaging ten days. I formed strong ties to the working women and to staff. Having these associations and familiarity with the brothel allowed me to return anytime and interview the women. I did this several times over the following two years and would sometimes sleep over. I also extended my data collection to three suburban² brothels in another part of Nevada near a major metropolitan area, spending three to four days each trip living on property with the workers and interviewing them during their time off. I returned to work in the brothels again in the summer of 2016 and 2017 and was once again living at the Cathouse while interviewing other workers.

I was employed as an independent contractor and worked on premises as required by the establishment. I would bring one or two suitcases with me depending on the length of my

stay, filled with lingerie, heels, regular clothing, sex toys, condoms, lube, hygiene products, and decor for my room. As all workers must, I registered as a legal prostitute with the local sheriff's office, and underwent weekly testing for sexually transmitted infections. I paid \$20 a day in rent every day except for on days that I booked \$300 or more. I was expected to make every line-up as were all the workers, but admittedly I would sometimes pretend to be in the bathroom if I heard the people at the door say that they only wanted a tour of the brothel. I never left the brothel during my stays, although I would have been permitted to leave for up to 24 hours without having to be re-tested for sexually transmitted infections. When I was not with clients, I was either in my room or spending time with other workers, most often in the backyard and hot tub. We were prepared for the line-up bell to ring even while in the hot tub, keeping our lingerie and shoes within reach. Meals were prepared by the restaurant next door of the same owner with a 50% discount. However, the house mom also cooked for the workers that did not want the restaurant food, and individual workers would also cook for themselves. I do not know how to cook so I ate food from the restaurant and meals prepared by the house mom or other workers. Although some brothels have housekeeping staff, Bettie's Cathouse did not, and we were responsible for cleaning our rooms and any shared spaces. The Cathouse did not operate on shifts as some brothels did; workers had to be prepared to see clients at all hours. If the line-up bell rang in the middle of the night, workers were expected to wake up and go to the parlor. Many of the workers would "sleep pretty," meaning they would sleep in lingerie and make-up. This seemed like a nightmare to me, and I was exempt from having to work in the middle of the night because I took prescribed sleep medication.

Due to the medication, I was a heavy sleeper and the bell rarely ever woke me.

I would wake up around 10 AM each day; everyone had to be "floor ready" by 11 AM.

I would end most days having drinks with other workers in the backyard or in the parlor.

Participant observation allowed for a great deal of access to the day-to-day conversations of sex workers, including immediate reactions and later reflections on interactions with clients, jokes, frustrations. The participatory aspect allowed my experience of selling sex to inform and interpret the reactions of other women as well as be reflective of my own. It also allowed interviewees to feel comfortable with me, as I was working alongside them. Much time was spent in the parlor where workers, clients, and management would freely walk around and converse, or outside in the hot tub, either alone or with other workers. I made observations and took notes frequently throughout the day. All workers at the brothel knew that I was also collecting data on them and the brothel for research.

Interviews

I interviewed a total of 50 sex workers, ranging in age from 19-55 years old. Thirty-four workers were from the brothels in a rural county where outdates (a session in which worker and client leave the brothel to go on a conventional date) are not legal and 16 were from a suburban county where they are legal. Thirty-three workers identify as Caucasian, eight as Hispanic, four as Black, three as Asian and two as “other” (multi-racial). Throughout the rest of this dissertation, I will collapse categories and refer to my participants as White and women of color. I understand that there are important differences in the experiences and histories of different racial and ethnic groups, but the small numbers in each group would make it easy to identify my participants.

The interviews were semi-structured and lasted anywhere from 30 to 60 minutes. I asked questions about demographic information, work histories, performances of intimacy and marketing, boundary-making, and stigma. To understand performances of intimacy I asked

about which performances they utilize in the brothel, how they market themselves and why, and how they experience sex with clients. To understand how they constructed boundaries, which also pertained to how they managed stigma, I asked if there are acts they will not perform in the brothel, what these acts meant to them, and how they manage intimate relationships in their personal lives as sex workers. I transcribed interview data as I collected it, and this process allowed me to form new insights and often prompted me to add new questions to the original interview. When transcribing, I listened for ways that their answers reflected race, gender, and class in individual, interactional, and institutional domains (Choo & Ferree, 2010; Risman, 2004). I looked for themes, significance, and meaning in the transcriptions, and made comparisons between groups of workers (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2007).

Semi-structured interviews allowed for probing into my areas of interest with enough flexibility for the worker to elaborate where she felt necessary. I transcribed the interviews without the use of software. I carefully listened to each interview and created a verbatim transcript. Transcribing the interviews allowed me to relive the interview while simultaneously noting patterns, reoccurring themes, and auto-ethnographic reflections. The transcripts and audiofiles are all saved to my password-protected hard drive as well as Dropbox (“cloud” data storage).

It should be noted that I collected more data on the GFE than the PSE during the interview process, a function of its popularity. At the start of this dissertation, I assumed that most workers provided something akin to the pornstar experience because I assumed men were primarily going there for sex. When I entered the brothel, I heard about the girlfriend experience immediately, and it was discussed as a marketing tool much more frequently than

any performance. Some workers focused exclusively on the GFE, while many offered a range of services but preferred one over the other, and some refused to offer the GFE based on how their boundary-making. I realized that there are different ways that workers deal with and commodify intimacy, and that the GFE was the most talked about and the most marketed by the brothels themselves. As a result, this dissertation provides more data and insight into the girlfriend experience via interviews. However, more data about the PSE is presented in chapter seven, an autoethnography in which I explore my own experiences as a PSE worker.

Effects of Intersecting Identities on the Interview Process

My intersecting identities of sex worker and student affected my fears about interviewing as well as the way in which I would ask questions. I was having sex for money just like my participants, but they knew that I had other sources of income. I did not “need” to be there in the same way that many of them did. This place of privilege was a source of shame for me when I interviewed workers who came from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and/or had bad experiences working as illegal sex workers. Asking them questions about these bad experiences felt strange and voyeuristic, and I did not want my participants to feel like I was looking at them under a microscope and I also did not want them to feel judged.

I also feared that they would resent me for coming into prostitution from a place of privilege with my main intent being to collect data for a doctoral dissertation. One of my biggest fears was that I would not get enough participants because most workers would say “no” to being interviewed. Amazingly, only one worker said no over the entire course of my research. Initially she said yes, but then changed her mind when her child’s father told her that he did not want her to do the interview. The overwhelming sentiment among participants was that they were happy somebody was looking into their world from their perspective, and that

somebody cared to get to know their stories. The women were happy to open up and talk to me, and my fears were largely unfounded. However, in the back of my mind was always my place of privilege as a White-passing middle class graduate student.

In an effort to make my participants feel comfortable, I tried to ask my questions without any judgement. For example, I would ask the question “have you ever had a pimp?” without presuming that having a pimp would automatically be a “bad thing;” some of these women were dating their pimps or had children with their pimps. I come from a world where having a pimp is inconceivable, but I had to remind myself that some of my participants had backgrounds very different from my own, and life experiences that I could not relate to. In order to be objective, I had to keep an open mind and let the participants shape their own narrative, rather than letting my preconceived notions take over the narrative. I used the terminology “pimp” in my questioning, and in retrospect may have been better served by reframing to ask about anybody who took a portion of their earnings, as well as anybody that helped them procure clients. The term “pimp” is entrenched with racism and classism, conjuring up stereotypical images of abusive criminal Black men in low-income areas. However, nobody protested against my use of the word, and the women who told me that they did have pimps also used the terminology, although some would distinguish between “types” of pimps. One worker told me about “guerilla” pimps who embody the abusive stereotype, and “finesse” pimps who are essentially boyfriends who live off of the sex worker’s earnings.

Data Analysis

Using a grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Charmaz, 1999), I transcribed and coded my interviews as I gathered them; this allowed me to notice patterns as well as areas of inquiry I should expand upon. In line with grounded theory, I used the data to

form my analytical categories, not from preconceived ideas. I focused on repeated terms and phrases in interviews, highlighting these and separating them into different categories. I analyzed these themes using the lens of intersectionality, listening for reflections on race, gender, and class, at three levels: individual, interactional, and institutional (Choo & Ferree, 2010; Risman, 2004). In addition, I used what Choo & Ferree refer to as a “structural-type process centered analysis,” examining the effect that different identities have on each other, for example how gender is raced and how race is gendered (Choo & Ferree, 2010). This helped me to look at more than just the intersection of their identities. McCall (2005) referred to this as an intercategory approach.

Initial manifest and in-vivo coding of interviews revealed initial leads, a second round of focused coding revealed three themes: Identity and meaning-making, justifying and sanitizing sex work via comparisons, and constructing and managing boundaries. These themes form the basis of my first three results chapters in which I examine the role of intersectional dynamics in worker performances (individual level), interactions with each other (interpersonal level) as well as the brothels themselves (institutional level). I also reviewed my field notes, which I wrote regularly while working in the brothel, to examine my own perceptions about the aforementioned themes. Finally, I reviewed supporting materials that pertained to marketing, such as pamphlets from the brothels, brothel websites, and my own timecards, which kept track of my rates.

Operationalizing Intersectionality

In 1989 Crenshaw coined the term intersectionality to describe how individual characteristics such as race, class, and gender, intersect and overlap in multidimensional systems of oppression (Crenshaw, 1989). In her 2004 article, Risman proposed that scholars

look at dimensions of structures of inequality, such as gender, in three domains: individual, interactional, and institutional (Risman, 2004). In order to understand how intersectionality was reproduced in individual brothel performances and the institution of brothels themselves, I listened carefully to interviews, taking note of how workers talked about their various identities in relation to their work. I listened for how the workers discussed gender, how they understood their positions as women in a stigmatized field, how they discussed class, privilege, and education, and how their intersecting identities impacted their experiences at work. While there was little discussion in interviews about race, I looked for ways that women talked about gender and class that were inseparable from race, such as the criminalization of sex work and the criminalization of people of color.

Ethics

The question of positionality pertaining to ethics is heightened in prostitution research. The feminist sex wars of the 1970s and 80s brought about intense debates between anti-porn feminists and “sex positive” feminists about the agency of women in the sex industry and the very nature of the work. This period fueled charges on the one hand that prostitution insiders lack critical reflection on the forces that objectify them, while on the other hand, outsiders oversimplify the experiences of sex workers, objectifying sex workers at the same time as criticizing their objectification (Chancer 1993; Dewey & Zheng, 2013). While not fully resolving this dilemma, autoethnography in this case allowed for increased examination of the relationships between self as sex worker, self as researcher and interview subjects. Insider research refers to work done with populations of which the researcher is also a member (Kanuha, 2000). Alvesson (2009) refers to this as “at-home ethnography” in which a double socialization takes place. I was socialized both as an academic but also as a member of the

community I chose to study. I shared a common bond with the participants, a similar identity, a mode of communicating (Asselin, 2003). Being an insider allows for quicker acceptance of the researcher by the participants, and a greater depth of access. While examining these relationships, I had to remain aware of how my status as an “insider” affected the process, acknowledging the benefits as well as the ethical issues that can arise as an insider. One such issue is the potential to “go native;” in which I may become too immersed and lose perspective by emphasizing participation over observation (Malinowski, 1992). For example, if I became too close, I may not document or elaborate on information that I take for granted by being a member of the group. The key to managing insider/outsider tensions and pitfalls was to keep myself honest by taking an inventory of my own biases before and throughout the study, as well as keeping extensive field notes about external observations as well as internal processes (Alvesson, 2009).

I made it known to each worker almost as soon as I met her that I was a PhD student conducting research and interested in the experiences of brothel workers. Once I felt the initial ice was broken with a worker, I asked her if she would allow me to interview her, and everybody that I asked said yes except for one individual whose partner would not permit her to be interviewed. Interviews were conducted in places where others would not interrupt or hear us, often in one of our bedrooms but sometimes in the backyard or the hot tub. It was not uncommon for an interview to be interrupted by a line-up bell, and my participant and I would stop what we were doing and rush to the parlor to greet a potential client. Before doing so I would turn off the recorder, put the paperwork back in a closed folder, and stash it away in whatever room I was in, or bring everything back to my bedroom if time permitted. If neither of us were picked from line-up we would go back to where we were and finish the interview.

If either one of us was picked by a client, we would resume the interview after the session was finished. This was unavoidable since management would not have allowed workers to be pulled off of the floor for interviews and I did not want my participants to lose potential income.

There were also ethical considerations regarding informed consent and participant anonymity. Prior to beginning the interview, I told my participants that I would be audio recording and gave them an informed consent form to read and sign. I also asked the worker to pick a pseudonym to disguise her identity, and even though some workers said it was not necessary, I explained that I needed to disguise everyone's identity for the purposes of my study. I also explained that I would not be sharing any of the information told to me during the interview with anybody else in the brothel. In addition to having the workers choose pseudonyms, I disguised the names of the brothels, owners and management, and the locations, except for the suburban/rural divide. I did not link individuals to particular brothels because the brothels are so small, and this would be an issue particularly in regard to race, since some brothels only had a few women of color working in them. I took these privacy measures to protect my participants and the integrity of their interviews.

Conclusions

In this chapter I introduced my ethnography of five Nevada brothels in which I study the intersectional dynamics of different performances of intimacy. I described the ethnographic method that I used to collect data, including participant observation and semi-structured interviews. Interviews helped me to understand participant's experiences in their own words, and using Risman's 2004 theory, I examined gender, race, and class in individual, interactional, and institutional levels. This allowed me to see how these systems function at

each level as well as how they affect one another. Analyzing how these systems function in two different performances, the girlfriend experience and pornstar experience, gave me insight into how different workers do the same job in different ways, and how these ways of doing work are raced, classed, and gendered. Participant observation gave me insight into how workers construct their work selves, as I had to do the same, and how I situated my own gender, race, and class in my performance and work environment.

Chapter 4

Marketing & Management

I don't want anyone ever talking about sex in the ranch, ever, unless the client brings it up. If you walk up to a guy in the bar and say hey, I want to fuck you, he may have wanted to fuck you but maybe he wanted to take you to dinner first and fuck you, maybe he just wanted to talk, now maybe he does not want to fuck you and you blew it. Some guys are happy to come in and have the GFE with no sex and spend that kind of money. The real money is in repeat clients, then they start spending more money because they want more time. It can just be talking, picking your brain, and as smart as you are, as long as you don't overpower them, they would love it. (Brothel owner Daniel Hart, Feb, 2017)

Introduction

In this chapter, I will explore how the different performances of commodified intimacy as well as brothels were ranked by management, and how these rankings stem from stereotypes about race, class and gender. I will explore how management perpetuated systems of oppression in how they assigned workers to different brothels. I will discuss the classist implications of the link between education and sexiness, as well as perceived qualities of the “best” workers, racial make-up of the brothels, and how a past of working in illegal prostitution impacted workers' present in legal prostitution.

Brothel Management, Marketing, and Systems of Oppression

Workers at the brothels I have interviewed have the freedom to choose what they offer and how they market themselves but may not have a choice in which brothel they work, and the brothels are not created equal. One brothel owner, Daniel Hart, owned several brothels,

and he had his favorites. One in particular was his pride and joy. He always made it very clear to me that “the real money is The Red Light Brothel,” his exact words that I heard dozens of times throughout the years. The other brothels did not receive nearly as much attention from Hart personally, media, or advertising. The distinction between the girls in suburban brothels and girls in rural brothels was clear from the beginning- suburban meant big bucks and elite. There were several reasons for this distinction. In part it was because of the fame of a reality TV show based around life at the Red Light Ranch. But importantly, differences in county ordinances allowed brothel workers in some counties to go on “outdates,” while workers in other more rural county brothels were prohibited. This allowed for the growth and development of what Hart saw as the biggest money maker in the brothels, the girlfriend experience.

GFE and the Outdate

An outdate is a type of girlfriend experience session, where intimacy and authentic companionship are taken to the next level- a real date. Clients are able to take the worker to a predetermined location outside of the brothel for their session after paying for the service in the brothel and giving management a schedule of their plans. Thus, clients pay for time in the brothel, and then time outside the brothel, which can last as long as several days. The client and worker can go anywhere in Nevada except for counties where prostitution is illegal; Las Vegas is excluded because prostitution is illegal in Clark County. The most popular outdate excursions are those which take the client and worker out of the brothel for several hours, and typically include activities such as hiking, sight-seeing, and lunch and/or dinner. The act of leaving the brothel to be taken on a “real date” where sex is only a fraction of time spent together already designates this as a “special” event, where the worker is being paid a premium for her

emotional labor.

Workers who do not offer the girlfriend experience miss out on the opportunity to go on these expensive extended sessions. Outdates on the shorter end run two or three hours in length, whereas others can last for one, two, three days, even a full week. The minimum price for an outdate averages \$5,000, and this is only for a few hours. Some workers could and would charge \$50-100,000 for outdates that lasted several days or even a week or more. During this time the client gets the undivided attention of the worker, and typically she does not book any other sessions. They eat together, go out together, and often sleep next to each other. It is a very time and energy consuming session for the worker and requires plenty of emotional labor.

Kess, a White worker in her mid-20s, would plan extravagant outdates with clients, sometimes months in advance, using her savvy negotiating skills to convince clients to book months in advance with a deposit. She told me that a weekend with her costs \$50,000, and I heard similar price ranges from a couple other workers, primarily at the Red Light Ranch.

Although all the suburban brothels were permitted to do outdates, the Red Light Ranch attracted the most outdate clients, attracting wealthy men who were looking for an entire experience.

Some workers even convinced clients to take out new lines of credit to fund their escape. Hart's slogan for the Red Light Ranch was "it's not just sex- it's an adventure." Kess is White, formally educated, and like other workers within her demographic and cultural capital, knew how to leverage her negotiation skills and intellect to make her the most amount of money.

Management Sorting and Intersectional Dynamics

Workers at rural brothels did not have the opportunity to cash in on these high dollar sessions, nor did they have the same level of marketing and media to bolster them. Although I preferred the smaller house, Bettie's Cathouse felt like the black sheep of Hart's brothels, and he would spend years convincing me to go to the Red Light Ranch and become a GFE provider. He made no secret of the fact that he thought I was wasting my time at the rural brothels, and for four consecutive months he sent me the income data of the top earners at Red Light Ranch, ranging from \$20,000 to \$110,000, some women working only a week or two out of the month while others worked almost every day.

When I asked Hart why he thought I would be a good fit for Red Light Ranch, he would praise my intellect, conversational skills, and appearance, but it was clear that physical attributes played a smaller role than behavior. Hart wanted educated girls who would blend in well at dinner parties and political events to work at the Red Light Ranch, his "high-end" brothel, marketed as a vacation destination.

Thus, the distinction between brothels was reproduced in how management assigned the workers. Although many women showed up to the brothel they knew they wanted to work at and did just that, many others emailed a general manager who then decided which brothel that woman would best fit into based on her physical attributes. The girls seen as providing the most financial promise were sent to the Red Light Ranch, and when workers at other houses started to bring in serious money, they would often be moved to the Red Light Ranch. It was considered a privilege to work there. The women had access to amenities that rural brothel workers did not, for example, prepared food brought in from the restaurant every day and housekeeping staff. Not surprisingly these women were given more opportunities in terms of

media and events in addition to making more money.

Women who worked at the Red Light Ranch were also much more likely to be mentored by Hart, who spent more time there than any of his other brothels, and would routinely sit down with workers and advise them on how to make more money. This gave these workers an advantage. In an interview conducted in 2017, I asked Hart “what would you tell a girl who wants to make more money?” Hart answered, “I would tell her don’t sell sex.” This brothel owner’s attention and skill to crafting what he considered his most elite brothel demonstrates that he considered the girlfriend experience as the highest class performance. It distances itself from sex, instead characterized by companionship and conversation. Whereas sex is dirty and not appropriate for a “good girl”, not having sex is a marker of higher class, education. And this upper class, highly heterosexually gendered performance of whiteness was, as he knew, the most profitable.

Another key way that intersectional dynamics reflected how workers were categorized is in the contrast between education and sexiness. Whereas sex is considered dirty, not having sex is a marker of higher class, education, and money. I used to wear what I considered sexy lingerie, stockings, and heels in line ups, which I assumed every man wanted, but Hart would always tell me to “tone it down,” to show less in my photos and to replace the lingerie and heels with sun dresses and flats. He would often tell me that the “girl next door” makes the most money. His conception of the perfect sex worker embodied an almost stereotypical gender performance, someone who is not too sexual, is one that is smart and engaging, but also demure and deferential. During our interview he complimented me by saying that I am smart, but advising me to “not overpower them,” insinuating that my intellect would intimidate the average client.

Be smart, but not smarter than the client. Be sexy, but don't talk about sex. Hart had years of experience as a brothel owner and knew who profited the most, and he knew that it was the women providing a place where "a man could be a man." His characterization of the ideal sex worker relied on traditional gender roles, White middle class notions of appropriate control of one's body and upper class education. The fact that I was a PhD student was appealing to Hart because he could use me to showcase that he had educated women working for him. He brought me to several events over the years including political fundraisers and Libertarian festivals, and he also asked me to do media with him, which I happily obliged. When he introduced me to people, he would immediately tell them about my education and explain that I was working there as part of a study. He was visibly proud to have a graduate student working for him, and he would do the same with other workers who were in school including a former girlfriend of his who worked at the Red Light Ranch and was also pursuing a doctorate.

The link between education and sexiness demonstrates how the brothels reproduce classist ideologies. The way Hart suggested workers craft their physical appearance also reproduced a classism that stems from mind/body dualism. The way I was told to dress in order to adhere to standards of the best brothels demonstrates that certain looks and styles of beauty were more important in the realm of the PSE and shorter encounters in which the client is looking to "get in, get off, and get out," as some GFE workers would characterize it. It was more important for PSE workers to wear revealing lingerie, heels, and anything that would emphasize and accentuate the sex appeal of their bodies. Hart told me to "tone it down," referring to my physical appeal and instead urged me to mute it by covering more of my body and instead emphasizing my personality and intellect. Instead of recognizing how the mind

and body could work together, Hart reproduced a mind/body dualism that favored the mind- the GFE. PSE encounters were positioned by both workers and Hart as inferior to the GFE, and I was acutely aware of this as someone who preferred shorter parties and detested any experience resembling aGFE. I was aware that I was working at the black sheep brothel and missing out on high rollers, but I knew that the intense level of emotional labor required of a GFE session would violate my personal boundaries.

Views of “Illegal” Sex Workers

One of the most interesting ways workers were coded was in how management viewed their past experiences with illegal sex work in a context where prostitution is highly criminalized everywhere except in Nevada’s brothels. Providing full service sex legally in and of itself is a marker of class privilege. It is costly to work legally, particularly at the start when a worker faces the most up-front costs and a lack of regular clients. If a worker lives outside of Nevada, she has to pay for travel, cost of the ride from the airport to the ranch, a work card (obtained after background check and fingerprinting is conducted, required to work in all counties), and test for sexually transmitted infections. She might also have to pay somebody to watch her children or pets. If the worker does not have sex toys, lube, lingerie, and heels, she will need to buy these items, as well as hygiene products; the ranch does not provide shampoo, soap, and other amenities despite charging a daily rental fee. In addition, the worker gives 50 percent of her booking to the brothel. Until the worker has built up a reputation and has steady income from repeat clients, initial trips to the brothel may not be as lucrative as she had hoped. As a result, the turn-over rate is very high, with some workers leaving after only a few days. In contrast, workers who build a reputation and accumulate regulars may stay for several years.

Whether or not a worker had been or is simultaneously working illegally outside of the brothel at the time of being hired factored into management's decision of where to place her. Ofcourse, it was impossible for management to always know who had worked illegally, but the presence of an escort website or social media marketing themselves as an independent escort were indicators. Working illegally while working in the brothels was not allowed although difficult to police. Many women would only work legally while living in the brothel but would see clients (not necessarily brothel clients) when at home. This was common among women I interviewed in the rural brothels and less so in the suburban brothels, particularly the Red Light Ranch, and this was by design. A friend of mine who worked illegally in Las Vegas was interested in working legally and I facilitated a conversation between her and Hart. She wanted to work at the Red Light Ranch, and I assumed that is where he would place her; she was White, in her 40s, a GFE provider, well-spoken, and physically attractive. She was unhappy when he placed her at a different suburban brothel without explanation. When I asked Hart why she couldnot work at the Red Light Ranch instead, he said it was because she was known to work illegallyoutside of the brothel and if she were arrested it would tarnish the Red Light Ranch's reputation. This affirmed the Red Light Ranch as the most elite brothel, and one where women from lower socioeconomic backgrounds had a disadvantage. After my friend was hired, she noticed that the manager blocked her on social media. She confronted the manager about it and was told that shewas blocked because her social media promoted her independent (illegal) escort work. After a couple of months, she moved on to work at a different elite suburban brothel where management immediately advised her that they would not hire her unless she took down her website and changed her social media to only reflect her legal work. Despite the

fact that she was an independent contractor, she was told what she was allowed to do when she was home from the brothel.

In this section it is clear that management reproduced the dominant view of sex workers as immoral and not deserving of respect by focusing on their legal status and the protections that come along with legality. The way brothel owners and managers viewed illegal sex work also reflected and reproduced images of crime and law breaking in the US that have historically been constructed in racialized ways (Wacquant, 2017).

Race and Brothels

The distinctions between brothels were racially coded in various ways. Sixty nine percent of my sample worked in the rural brothels and of the 31% of all workers who worked in the “higher end” suburban brothels, not a single worker was Black. Of the 9 workers I interviewed from Red Light Ranch, 6 were White, 2 Hispanic, and 1 Asian. Red Light Ranch does have Black women working there, but none were in the ranch during the time of my interviews. There were approximately 25 women in the brothel at this time.

Table 1

Race of Workers by Brothel Location

Race	Rural	Suburban	Totals
White	22	11	33
Black	4	0	4
Asian	2	1	3
Hispanic	5	3	8
Other	1	1	2
Totals	34	16	50

The way that management used workers' legal or illegal status to help determine in which brothel she would work disproportionately impacted women of color and made it more difficult for workers to improve their economic conditions. My data shows that the majority of women I interviewed had previously worked illegally. Sixty percent of my sample worked illegally prior to working in the brothel, 40% had never done full service sex work prior to the brothel. But the majority of women who had never worked illegally were White. Not only had women of color disproportionately worked illegally, 82%, many worked on the streets, and some had pimps.

Of the 40% that only worked legally, 84% were White workers. On average these workers had reported a higher SES growing up and had more formal education than those who had worked illegally. This group also has older women in it that transitioned to sex work later in life after a professional career. Thus, women of color are overrepresented among illegal workers. As mentioned in an earlier section, the most elite brothel- Red Light Ranch- did not hire workers who were known to work illegally, and this stratification makes it more difficult

for workers to move up the economic ladder. It is cyclical; race and socioeconomic status predict whether a woman will work legally or illegally. If she decides to go to the brothel, her history of working legally or illegally will factor into determining which brothel she will work in, which will ultimately dictate her earning potential

Table 2

Race and Legal Status of Past Sex Work

Legality	WoC	White	Total
Legal only	3	16	19
Illegal	14	15	29
Total	17	31	48

Conclusions

In this chapter I laid out the different ways that both performances of commodified intimacy and brothels were ranked by management and how these rankings reflected intersectional dynamics and perpetuated systems of oppression. The distinction between the brothels was reproduced in how management assigned the workers. The suburban brothels were allowed to do outdates; high priced sessions characterized by GFE performances whereas the rural brothels were not. The suburban Red Light Ranch was the owner’s favorite ranch and garnered the most media attention. It also had amenities that the rural ranches did not. Workers that the owner and management thought had the highest earning potential were

sent to the Red Light Ranch. The “best” workers were ones who reproduced heterosexual gendered performances of whiteness. I also discovered a link between education and sexiness, reproducing a classism that stems from mind/body dualism. Additionally, the brothels were different in their racial makeup; there were no Black workers available for interview when I was at the Red Light Ranch, and most of the women of color in my sample worked in the rural brothels.

Women of color were much more likely than White workers to have worked illegally in the past, and this factored into management’s decision of where to place workers. These hiring practices reproduced the view of sex workers as immoral by focusing on legal status, and also reproduced images of crime in the US that have been historically constructed in racialized ways.

Chapter 5

The Girlfriend Experience

Introduction

In this chapter I will explain how the performances of commodified intimacy in Nevada brothels, specifically the girlfriend experience, reflect intersectional dynamics. In particular, I will describe how women responded to questions asking them to describe the GFE, what they said about clients and GFE, and what those who primarily said they were GFE providers thought about the services they provide. In my sample of 50 women, 70% classified themselves as GFE providers. Some of the GFE providers also provided PSE (or offered all services, including fetish), but mainly focused on GFE as their specialty. Women of color are spread fairly evenly among GFE and PSE, but White women are more likely to be GFE providers, 64% of White workers are GFE. While women of all ages performed GFE, 91% of workers in their mid-40s or older chose GFE.

GFE, Gender, & Personhood

One of the most common responses I got when asking women to describe GFE was that the goal was to serve clients emotional needs -- be interested in the client, his life, what he has to say, and being attentive when he speaks. Workers say things such as “make them feel special,” performing emotional labor, a description that reflects the way class and traditional norms of gendered service intersect. My respondents talked about pleasing and serving the client by attending to his sexual needs but mostly by providing an escape from real life. Gigi, a woman of color in her late 40s, says

Just, it's a job. It's a job. You just deal with it because you have to make him feel special and this is his way of coming here and relaxing. Maybe he's having a bad time, maybe he's had a bad day of work, maybe he's going through a divorce. This is his way to escape and relax and go back to his normal life again.

She puts his needs first, providing a break from his regular routine by making him feel special. It is her job to make him feel relaxed and at ease while he's on his brief escape from everyday stressors. She says you just "deal with it," demonstrating that she is ready to put the client's needs before her own, something expected of women in gendered service work.

Shayla, a White worker in her late 30s with a BA degree from an upper class family who prefers the GFE says this, when asked what she provides clients:

We are here to fill that void in their lives, that fantasy whatever it may be. And we get so many different clients in here, every one of them is different. I try to really get to know the client for them.

Similarly to how Gigi talks about providing an "escape" for the client, Shayla provides a "fantasy." The GFE is intended to take the client out of his everyday world and provide a space to relax and fulfill needs that are not met in his normal life.

Even if the client is unpleasant or rude, some workers will still perform intense emotional labor, much like interactive service workers are expected to do. Akin to interactive service labor, the girlfriend experience is inherently gendered and associated with qualities of traditional femininity such as being "nice," deferential, and a caretaker. Workers discuss how they provide emotional labor in gendered ways. Heather, a White worker in her early 40s, discusses being nice even to clients she doesn't like:

A good client would be one that I form a friendship, a real connection with. Now a

badclient would be one that doesn't even acknowledge that I'm a real person ya know, doesn't use my name or anything, acts like I'm a blowup doll. I'm polite to them, I service them, I do what I'm paid to do and then they're out the door and please don't come back to see me again.

Kess, a White worker in her mid-20s who specializes in GFE and is extremely successful says that the GFE is "making the other person happy:"

I'm into whatever makes the other person happy, if they're feeling good, I'm feeling good. I like to talk to someone and get to know them and what really turns them on before we party, find that out and delve in.

Like the other workers, Kess puts the client's needs before her own, wanting him to feel good. The man's sexual needs are more important than the woman's, and like a skilled service worker, she listens to the client so that she knows what turns him on. Female sexuality comes second to male sexuality, aligning with traditional views that position men as having greater sexual appetites than women.

The expectation of being nurturing also emerged as a theme. River, a White worker in her early 40s, is a top GFE provider and feels that having a "loving heart" is essential to her work.

I've seen wonderful people, because I think it's more...you have to have a loving heart to do this work. It's stereotyped that we are hardcore, we don't care, or whatever, and I think no matter what you do you can always carry yourself with class and I think it does take a big heart and an open minded person to do what we do.

River prides herself on her GFE, specializing in seeing veterans and disabled clients. She expressed a true love for the work, and she herself sees it as more than just sex, she comments

on the chemistry which she believes comes along with having an open mind. She also describes the GFE as part of who she is; she has a “loving heart,” being an “open minded person.” Having these innate qualities enables her to provide a satisfying girlfriend experience. The GFE is not just something that she does; it is part of her personhood. She also explicitly uses the word “class” to describe how she carries herself as a GFE provider, elevating her status as do many of the other GFE providers.

Michelle, a White worker in her early 40s from The Red Light Ranch, described a love for her job and also highlighted the emotional support that she gives to her clients:

Yes I’m titled as the girlfriend experience, that’s where the title came from, our reality show. I was the GFE. For me, that’s an intimate relationship with my client. We continually text and email, I may only see them 3 times a year, but we talk every day. We have a friendship, that’s what it is, being there for them emotionally as well as physically.

Like Michelle, Abby, a White GFE provider in her early 40s, described doing things that a real girlfriend would do:

They look forward to seeing me once a week, my 88 year old guy drives in from Sacramento every week to come see me. And he tells me the same story, “when I was in the military, the war...” but every time I act like it’s the first. And just getting to know them personally, having a conversation. “Hey, how was your week? Did you do anything special?” It’s honestly like being a girlfriend.

Both workers provide emotional support and undivided attention to the client in order to make them feel special as well as cared for, and both workers reproduce traditional gender norms of women as nurturing. Both Michelle and Abby also distance themselves from the sex

act of the GFE by describing other essential components, maintaining their “good girl” status.

Boundary Making & Distancing From Sex

As mentioned in the previous section, another important way GFE providers talked about their work was in differentiating their service from other kinds of service, and these too were coded with class, race and gender terminology. It was common for GFE workers to use phrases meant to distance the GFE from the sex act, such as describing it as “more than just sex,” focusing on the relationship aspect and positioning anything else as less valued. They are associating unrestrained recreational sex with low class, which speaks to race as much as it does to class. In society, sex had by White women is positioned as restrained, relational, and therefore of a higher class than the hypersexual recreational sex had by Black and Latina women, who are both stereotyped as hyper-sexual (Brooks, 2010; Merla-Watson, 2017). In line with these stereotypes, GFE sex is a performance of relational sex, while PSE is recreational sex had solely for pleasure, and the former is marked by class privilege while the latter is seen as lesser.

GFE providers constructed boundaries by focusing on what they did not provide as much as what they did provide. Some GFE providers even made disparaging comments about different kinds of sessions, for example, shorter sessions in which the sex act is the focus. Michelle, a White worker in her early 40s known for her GFE at the Red Light Ranch, compares her longer GFE parties to quickie parties and describes why she does not like the short parties: “It’s all panic mode, get your shit off and get out. It’s so hectic, I don’t like it at all.” In opposition to this is the relaxed, leisurely GFE session where both client and worker can relax, and as the time passes, the dollar value increases. Like other GFE providers, Michelle also distances herself from the sex act, the narrative that the GFE is “more than just

sex.” She says:

For me, I love the friendships I make, and it just makes everything we do seem real and like, they’re just supporting me in anything that I want to put myself into. That’s where the money comes in; the exchange of money is not for sex or an act, it’s for all that in return. I need that, I’m almost a prude in a lot of ways. I can’t just do the quickie shit. Some girls love and prefer that because there is no intimacy. They perform an act and they’re done. I don’t like that. It makes me feel bad, it makes me feel like I cheated someone, like I cheated myself.

She also refers to herself as a prude; good girls are prudes, not promiscuous. Being prudish is another marker of traditional femininity and high class. River, a White worker in her early 40s, told me

We are loving, we are caring and we can share, because people ask me “how can you lay with just anybody?” and it’s not just laying with just anybody. What it is to me is you find chemistry one way or another whether it’s through conversation, whether it’s through looks, you know you do, and when you find that, it’s easy. It’s not hard. It’s being open, open minded.

River distances herself from the “slut” stereotype by explaining that she does not “lay with just anybody,” wanting to be seen as a woman with sexual restraint despite her job. “Goodwomen” are not promiscuous and good women are also nurturing. River is conforming to traditional gender stereotypes- she may be a sex worker, but what she provides is “more than sex,” she is giving an authentic part of herself to the client, whom she truly cares for.

Suzie, a White GFE worker in her early 40s, also distances her GFE from the sex act

by disparaging other women's sexualities and explicitly states its' connection to the mind.

I love the girlfriend experience. Because I like the mind connection that I make because, this is why people get the GFE. Too bad that girls are making it so easily accessible in terms of their body. A GFE doesn't mean I'm going to throw my pussy in your face and I know people think that.

Suzie is not "accessible" as she says- accessible women are slutty. Like Michelle, Suzie embraces the gender stereotype that a good, high-class woman is prudish. She also reproduces a mind/body dualism in the way she talks about sexual behavior. Suzie became upset with women who offered GFE parties for under her chosen rate of \$3500, feeling that these rates cheapen the experience. She compares the mental labor put into her work to the 'easier' experience of pure body labor, again describing what she does *not* do: "Yeah GFE is always more because it requires more mental work. I mean like, you spend time with that person. I think it's easier to just bend over and get fucked." She goes on to explain that the GFE constitutes much more than certain sexual activities, and reserves judgment for sex workers who mislabel themselves as GFE. She describes what GFE is and what it is not. She tells me about an \$18,000 party:

A lot of girls would say oh that means I kiss and that they eat my pussy or that means I do this, they think of GFE in terms of activities. I know that it's not all about activities at all. A true GFE encounter is much more intimate, you start getting to know the person before you even meet. So it's not something I can really put a finger on, it's so much more than just activities. If guys are going for GFE because he thinks he can kiss, and that's it, that's not GFE, not real GFE. GFE is when they come back to you, they talk to you after. You have to make that initial encounter of course, but you're not

going to get a GFE just because a girl lets you kiss. I'll give you an example of a number, 18k for 24 hours GFE and we didn't have sex. Yeah, and he spent the night with me, it was all foreplay. Talk. But still, it wasn't like consistent, constantly between my thighs. It was --I have made an appetizer plate with cheese and fruits, we have a television although we didn't watch much, there was movies prepared. The jacuzzi, we sat in there. It was just a lot of intimacy, talking, connecting. Like I'm actually making connections, maybe that's to me, that's what a true GFE is. When I say ultimate, that's what it means to me. We may not have sex. This guy that just left, we did not have intercourse.

Suzie highlights the non-sexual activities in the session as well as the intimacy and connection. She enjoyed appetizers and a movie with her client, activities that many would associate with dating rather than a commercial interaction. She emphasizes that a true girlfriend experience is defined by emotional connection rather than specific sexual acts such as kissing and oral sex, downplaying the role of sex in the GFE and mimicking relational sex. By positioning herself as different, and more talented, than non-GFE³ providers she distances herself from whore stigma (Pheterson, 1993). Heather, a White GFE worker in her early 40s, explains why she is a GFE provider versus a PSE provider, detailing things she says she could never do:

I'm not the PSE sex goddess type, they're getting more of the girl next door. I mean I'll do some wild things based on what the guy paid for. It's like me turned up a little bit. It's not really an act because it is still me, it's very hard for me to separate it. Like some of the PSE stuff, I could never do it. I mean I'm not opposed to dirty talk or sensual talk but there's a part in me where it crosses over and it's too much. Not all

porn does that, but some do and the ones that do I'm like ooh I'm not even turned on anymore. Words like "cumdumpster," no I'm just, it is the one bodily exchange thing which takes away the intimacy; that's not up for negotiation.

Heather is willing to do "wild things" and talk dirty but has boundaries around words she finds offensive. She relies on the performance of porn stars to inform her ideas of what a PSE entails and describes the point at which she is turned off. She is only willing to go so far with her PSE performance- to the point where she feels the intimacy is gone. As a GFE provider, the intimate connection is crucial, but also her own authenticity; she describes her difficulty in separating her work self from her true self, saying that the PSE she performs is still her. To perform actions or say things that she negatively associates with PSE would mean that is part of who she is because she has difficulty separating herself from her performance. Like other GFE providers, her performance is part of her personhood, whereas PSE providers dissociate their performance from their true selves; it is merely what they do at work. I will discuss the way PSE providers draw their boundaries in the next chapter.

GFE and Sexual Pleasure

There is little research on female sex workers and sexual pleasure at work, with the dominant assumption being that the clients are the only ones enjoying the sex. Research on worker pleasure in male sex work is more common, likely because of the discourses available to men as a result of their sexual agency. Some scholars believe that studying female pleasure in sex work can lead to increase women's sexual empowerment, both in sex work and in society (Doezema, 2013). Smith's 2017 research on female sexual pleasure in sex work found that while workers manufactured identities, some experienced authentic pleasure, most commonly when they had an emotional connection with the client (Smith, 2017). This

reproduces gender role norms of women as only enjoying relational sex. While many GFE workers in my sample reported enjoying the sex, they distanced themselves from the sex, which is recreational by nature.

Abby, a White worker in her early 40s mentioned above who uses narratives to distance from sex, but also told me that she enjoys the sex, stating ‘I enjoy it as much as my guys do!’ Mynx, a White GFE provider in her early 50s, expressed that she truly enjoys her time with clients, both sexually and emotionally;

The sex can be whatever you want, and it’s intimate for me because I like starting an evening in the shower, and we can learn each other’s bodies. I like people, I genuinely like people. And I can enjoy myself with my clients.

Mynx enjoys sex with clients, but earlier in the interview echoed the sentiment of many other GFE providers who distance from the sex by clarifying that “it’s not about the sex:”

I have a fan coming tomorrow night. He wants to spend the evening with me. We haven’t even talked about sex, it’s not about the sex. We get to sit and relax, you get to have the intimacy.

Mynx views her job in a way that makes it possible for her to relax and enjoy the sex. Unlike many of the PSE providers, these GFE providers view themselves as professionals. They used unique skill sets, and although professionalization of the job was a way to distance from the sex, it was also a mechanism by which to take pride in their work. This pride contributed to an enjoyment of the work, including the sex, that many non-GFE providers lacked.

Cherry, a White GFE provider in her late 20s, recalled an instance where a man who she was attracted to picked her out of a line up:

All I know is I got picked with a guy that I would have picked up at the bar. So, I do

get fucked by hotties. It was awesome, this guy paid bank for one night and I would fuck him for free!

Cherry goes on to say “If the guy is hot, I get full pleasure. I get off so much they need to mop the floor.” This was no exaggeration; when we had a threesome with a client, I was surprised at how much she was enjoying the sex, whereas I was faking it as I always did. Cherry enjoyed the sex as if the client were not a client but rather somebody she picked up at a bar, whereas I was turned off the moment it became transactional. Like many PSE providers, I drew boundaries between commercial and non-commercial sex, and these boundaries made it impossible for me to experience sexual pleasure at work. However, despite Cherry’s pleasure, she also distanced her work from sex during our interview, telling me:

It’s not all about sex. I’m learning more and more everyday about how to treat a man by talking to them in here. 99 percent of my clients are girlfriend experiences. Yeah, we mayfuck, but some of them just want to cuddle and talk to me.

Cherry distances from the sex act and also views her work in the brothel as a learning experience, ascribing meaning to what she does. This is similar to how other GFE providers give their work meaning by describing themselves as healers and teachers.

GFE and Comparisons to Respectable Professionals

Another way that GFE workers distance themselves from the sex act is by comparing their work to that of respectable professions. Suzie, a White worker in her early 40s, compared the GFE to professions that require education such as sociology and counseling, implying class and highlighting the mental and emotional skills required of GFE:

It’s the bond of talking, communicating, and hearing. I don’t do so much talking as

muchas I do listening and asking questions and you know in sociology and in counseling you learn to listen and you learn to hear unspoken messages.

Several women mentioned needing to be a good listener as part of the performance, comparing their work to counseling, another profession in which stereotypical gender roles shape behaviors. The commonality is the use of the mind versus just the body; the cultural capital of education. These women are more likely to take on an identity such as a healer or teacher to clients, focusing on a skill-set that they are proud to have crafted. When asked what she likes about her work, Bella, a woman of color in her late 30s and high-earning GFE provider, said

There are lots of things that excite me, I like seeing people having pleasure. That excited me, I somehow became a really good teacher to people, they relate well to me when they wanted to learn. So they need to learn how to please a woman. Sometimes they get it right, sometimes they don't, but I try my best to show them what works for me. I try to be real, if you will, because I think people that come in here are looking for the connection ya know they're looking for a time that, even though is short, it's a real time.

Bella highlighted that it is important that she be authentic, and a "good teacher" to her clients.

Bella also discussed the perception that people have of sex workers:

First of all, I did not like that word, prostitute, I wish my sheriffs' card didn't have that word. I don't like that at all. I just like to say I'm a businesswoman because that's what we are doing here.

In both quotes Bella compares her work to that of a "respectable professions," teaching and business. She genuinely cares about her client's needs and feels gratification in being able to

fulfill the duties of her job as a sexual teacher. She also prides herself on running a successful business; at the time of this interview Bella was one of the highest earners at the suburban brothel in which she worked.

In addition to professionalizing their services, some workers I interviewed also talked about their skills at GFE in terms of education. M, a White worker in her mid-50s, differentiated herself from other younger workers by making sure people know that she only began working in the brothels to write a book:

The girls, I was 51 when I first stepped onto a line up so the only way to keep my dignity, I thought, was to let people know that I'm only doing this for a book. I'm not really taking myself seriously, I'm not seriously trying to stand in line next to the twenty-somethings and think somebody is going to pick me.

Because she says her body is inferior to those of the "twenty-somethings," her intellect and education gives her a different type of status and is a marker of high class. M is White and formally educated, and at the time of our interview she was in her mid-50s and one of the highest earners in the brothel. She provided a variety of services but was known for her GFE and had many loyal regulars who came to see her for much more than sex; they wanted the companionship and nurturing touch that she provided. I had brief conversations with a couple of her regulars while they would wait for her at the bar and they expressed the same sentiment—they loved being in her company, and the conversations that they shared.

Michelle, a White worker in her early 40s, grew up in an upper class family and has an advanced degree. She has never worked illegally. She makes sure that I know that would only work somewhere high-end like the Red Light Ranch, saying

I interviewed at one other ranch and "found it to be disgusting, I didn't even unpack. I

will walk the sunset strip before I ever work at that place, it's horrifying! It's scary how they're not even in this millennium, I would never do this anywhere else. They're horrible, that's why I have no problem continuing my education because I know that after Daniel and Sally there is no business left. I absolutely love working here, I can't imagine and don't want to be anywhere else. I am well educated.

She points out her status as a "well educated" woman and explains that she is continuing her education so that she has a career in the event that the elite Red Light Ranch closes, implying that a well-educated woman would not work in any of the other ranches. She went on to explain that she could have another type of job if she wanted, again highlighting her education:

I absolutely love working here, I can't imagine and don't want to be anywhere else.

I'm well educated. It's not like I don't get people asking me all the time to do jobs, I did staging of homes, every day they call me and ask me to do it, in fact I had to turn down jobs because of all the media we have done lately.

Her ability to work in other fields because of her previous education gives her class privilege over the many providers who don't necessarily love the job but need to be there because it is their best option for making money.

GFE, Age, and Gender

Out of 11 providers between the ages 42-59, 10 were GFE providers. This may be a function of gendered stereotypes about young women and sexiness: young bodies are considered sexy while older bodies are not. Older women are more comfortable and confident in providing an experience that relies on the mind versus the body. An example of this is the quote from M, a GFE provider in her mid-50s, stated in the previous section: "I'm not

seriously trying to stand inline next to the twenty-somethings and think somebody is going to pick me.” She relied on her mind and education to attract clients, feeling that she could not compare based on looks alone.

GFE, Age, and Class

I also found a link between GFE, age, and class. Many of the older GFE workers were White women who came from higher socioeconomic status backgrounds, doing the job for reasons that are not purely financial. They come from a place of privilege and work there for reasons different than many non-GFE providers.

Sandy, a White GFE provider in her early 50s, tells me that she is retired and does not need the money. At the time of our interview, she had been working in the brothel for 7 months and was one of the highest earners at that particular ranch. She describes why she does the job:

I don't know that I could do the job if I didn't enjoy it. It would get boring and I wouldn't enjoy it. So really, the difference between you and I, in a way, is that you do it for the money and honestly, I don't do it for the money. The money is good ya know, and I want to pay off my expenses. And of course, everyone loves money, but I'm not here for the money. I'm retired, I have a pension. I'm not here for the money, I'm here for the experience.

She contrasted herself to me, a non-GFE provider, and explained that she has income from other sources. Like many of the older GFE providers, she comes from a background of privilege. M, a White GFE worker in her mid-50s described to me her reason for working in the brothel:

Well for me sex, this whole thing was supposed to be my big sex adventure. I did this as research for my second book. So, my life before this, I've always been extremely

sexual. So, this was a part of my journey for me, to explore sexual subcultures that I had not explored and to try to see if I could find a sexuality that worked for me.

M's main reasons for working there were not financial, but rather intellectual and sexual. She labeled her work as a "journey," and described it as an exploration of her sexuality. I remember her rates were varied, sometimes charging \$300 for an hour and other times charging more. In casual conversation she explained to me that she enjoys the sex with clients, so she does not feel bad when she charges less because she is getting something else of value out of the interaction. She was always willing to work with clients regardless of their budget, which made her a very popular provider with a wealth of regulars. At the time of our interview she told me that she was in the middle to upper class range socioeconomically.

Mynx, a White GFE provider in her early 50s, explained to me her reasons for working in the brothel:

Like I told you I've done porn, back in the 80s, then I left and just did life and now that I came back to porn and I have so many fans and followers that want to get with me, and I want to, the opportunity to meet with people and say thank you to them but for making me who I am, to give back, to be intimate with them, and have moments with fans. Not just the traveling we do at conventions and take a quick pic, but to spend time and get to know these people and my fans and followers, so I wanted to do it.

Mynx transitioned from porn to a conventional job and back to porn and then to the brothel as a way to give back to her fans. In the interview she also told me that she enjoys sex with her clients, and much like M, her work in the brothel seems to be a type of adventure. It is part of her sexual journey to be with her fans and it gives her intrinsic pleasure to be able to thank

them in this way. Her enjoyment of the job comes from that, not just the money. She grew up in an upperclass family and described herself as middle class at the time of the interview. All three of these women had conventional jobs before the brothels, one even having the ability to retire. The connection between age and privilege may be because these women had a chance to make money throughout their careers, even prior to sex work, for longer than young providers. The notion of furthering one's sexual journey in some way is also present in all three responses. Their class privilege, in part as a function of their age, allows them to explore their sexualities in ways that younger workers are not interested in doing. While older women gravitate to the GFE because of gendered stereotypes about sexiness and age, these women are also transgressing gender norms that associate youth with higher sex drives by being sexually active and adventurous despite their age.

Table 3

Age Breakdown by Performance

Performance	18-25	26-33	34-41	42-59	Total
GFE	11	9	5	10	35
Non-GFE*	8	4	2	1	15
Total	19	13	7	11	50

*Non-GFE because some workers also provide fetish in addition to PSE

Conclusions

In this chapter I explained how the performance of the girlfriend experience in Nevada brothels reflected intersectional dynamics. The girlfriend experience reproduced traditional gender role norms by being a nurturing performance in which workers perform emotional labor, similar to how interactive service workers do, to tend to the client's needs. GFE providers distanced themselves from the sex act to combat whore stigma, staying in line with gender role norms of women as prudish. One of the ways they did this was to compare their work to that of "respectable" professions such as teaching. They also emphasized education in discussing their work. Both ways reinforce the GFE was a White middle class performance. GFE providers discuss their work in a way that relates to their personhood; it is part of who they are. Unlike PSE providers, many enjoy the sex and don't distance their "real" self from their work, but say that it is not about sex. They constructed boundaries by telling me about what they are not- they are not "sluts." The great majority of providers over the age of 40 chose to be GFE providers, putting a value on the mind versus the body and reproducing the stereotype of young bodies as sexy. Several providers in their 40s and 50s told me that they were doing the work for reasons other than financial, reflecting class dynamics in the way they talk about GFE. Some described themselves as on a sexual journey, transgressing gender role norms of older women as less sexual, demonstrating how older GFE providers both transgress and acquiesce to gender role norms.

Chapter 6

The Porn Star Experience

Introduction

In this chapter I will describe how performances of commodified intimacy in Nevada brothels, specifically the pornstar experience, reflected intersectional dynamics. I will describe how women responded to questions asking them to describe the PSE, what they said about clients and PSE, and what those who primarily said they were PSE providers thought about the services they provide. Thirty percent of my sample provided PSE or non-GFE services, and 80% of these workers were in their early 30s or younger. Forty one percent of PSE/non-GFE workers were women of color.

Embodiment in the Porn Star Experience

When describing a GFE experience, workers mention kissing and physical closeness but primarily discuss the emotional labor involved. By contrast, the PSE is described almost entirely by physical acts. When I asked September, a White worker in her late 20s, about her PSE, she told me “I’m really good at porn star experience because I like different positions and I give crazy blowjobs.” The PSE is work done with the body; “crazy blowjobs,” deep-throating, and different positions.

Bad Girls of the Brothel: How They Describe PSE

The language that women used to describe the PSE differed from the language of GFE. Although both involve sex, women describing the PSE used words to denote a “naughty” dirtiness, whereas GFE providers did not. PSE providers positioned themselves as “bad girls.”

Shayla, a White porn performer in her late 30s, tells me that she offers a combination of GFE and PSE, and I ask her how she does it. She replies

It's like, good girl gone bad, which is why I say to them I can be naughty, I can be your little slut, but I'm also here for you and here to comfort you, hold you, kiss you, and make you feel special.

According to Shayla, the GFE is provided by good girls, and the PSE is provided by bad girls, she uses the words "naughty" and "sluts" to describe the performance and in turn how the client perceives the worker. This contrasts with the part of her performance that makes the client feel special, which is what "good girls do," reaffirming the gender stereotype of women as nurturers. This positions "good girls" against "bad girls:" the pariahs that push against gender role norms. The GFE is described as something loving that makes the client feel good about himself with none of the disparaging language. In her study of how performances of sexuality are classed in US high schools, Bettie (2000, 2003) found that when compared to White middle-class female students, Mexican-American students are seen as "trashy" and low class because of their make-up and tight clothing. My findings reflect a similar trend, the overt sexuality of the PSE is seen as a marker of low class. Bella, a woman of color and a top GFE provider in her late 30s, uses similar language to describe the PSE when I ask her what the phrase means to her.

I would say you gag more, if he wants me to spit on his cock to get it wet, or do crazy positions or I'm on my knees and he's grabbing my hair softly. So I think anyone can do it as long as you're more like, slutty I suppose? I'm not super loud you know, I'm very quiet. Girls here get surprised when I curse. They're like "what? Bella is cursing?"

Bella makes sure to point out that she is typically quiet and does not curse, conforming to gendered expectations of women as polite and non-threatening and also showing that she is a woman with class. Bella is one of the most popular GFE providers that I interviewed and prefers the intimacy of the GFE over the physicality of the PSE. As with most other PSE providers, she describes it in terms of physical acts; positions, being down on one's knees, and also mentions physical motions that the client might make such as grabbing her hair. Although she points out that a client would be permitted to do this "softly," the act of grabbing someone's hair is an aggressive one, and being down on one's knees is a sign of submission. Male aggressive behavior is never mentioned in discussions of the GFE; the woman playing out the GFE is seen as a loving and compassionate woman deserving of respect, whereas aggression is sometimes part of the PSE. In this way the PSE is a contradiction; it breaks from gendered expectations of good women as non-sexual and thus worthy of respect, while also conforming to the expectation that women are submissive to men.

PSE, Whore Stigma, and Boundary-Making

In her 1993 article, Pheterson details the Concise Oxford Dictionary's definition of a prostitute, which she uses interchangeably with "whore"- a woman who offers her body for hire for indiscriminate sex. It is also defined as a verb; prostituting oneself is to sell honor for base gain, an unworthy doing (Pheterson, 1993). Women who engage in prostitution, one of the ultimate taboos for women, take on whore stigma and are deemed as unworthy of respect. Workers who internalize whore stigma may construct a work self to distinguish themselves from their true selves, separating themselves from the stigma of their work (Sanders, 2005). The following examples will demonstrate how some of my participants did this, and how they

maintained gender role norms in their personal lives.

Sierra, a woman of color in her late teens/early twenties, who expresses disdain for the GFE, describes what PSE means to her and explains that she prefers providing the PSE: PSE is one that I do. Because I don't think too much of it, just me basically being hardcore, taking it up a notch and being more talkative and nasty and verbal, that's more so what I do with the dominant type thing. It's way more aggressive and rough so I put those two together and make it a true PSE. But GFE is one of the biggest things, they want that sensualness. And I'm like 'Ew no I'm a prostitute I'm sorry.' When I kiss it's a romantic thing, I do that with my man.

First, Sierra says that PSE is the one that she does- it is not who she is, just something she does. She then emphasizes that kissing is a "romantic thing," that she only does with her man. She is the bad girl at work and the good girl at work, espousing heterosexual norms of monogamy. She also uses the word "nasty" to describe how her behavior would differ from GFE which exemplifies the "dirtiness" of this form of body labor. Sierra also rejects the GFE by calling herself a prostitute, which some would argue is a derogatory term for a sex worker and a marker of low class. While the GFE is sensual and romantic, PSE is dirty, aggressive, and less expensive.

Similar to how GFE providers constructed boundaries by describing what they do not provide, PSE providers did the same. It was as important to them to tell me what they would not do as what they would do, which often related to their refusal to experience pleasure with clients. Comte (2014) describes this phenomenon in her research; workers treat sex as clinical and shut off the ability to experience pleasure to avoid feeling like "real whores," but also to remain faithful to their lover at home. Comte explains that workers may simultaneously have

pride in what they do while also feeling guilty about it (Comte, 2014). Comte explores the role of whore stigma, but not how different performances of sex work experience and manage that stigma. The workers that I describe in this section express guilt and even disgust about their work, a very different sentiment than the GFE providers discussed in the previous chapter.

Aqua, a White worker in her early 20s, and I both sat nude in the hot tub as I interviewed her, and she described the cognitive and physical techniques that she used to control her interaction with clients. Aqua was one of the youngest women that I interviewed and also one of the highest earners at the brothel. She had been working in the brothels for approximately two years at the time of the interview, often spending weeks and months at a time living on premises. Aqua was adamant about never having an orgasm with a client because she associated orgasms with meaningful romance, and even had ways in which she prevented herself from what many would perceive as a perfectly natural bodily reaction:

Never have I once came for a client because I feel like...I can, I mean, I'll squirt, but not from his penetration. I'll have my toys and I'll squirt for him but I won't give him my cum. It's like what we were discussin' the other day, with the red roses. That's like, okay I'm giving you this cum. But it's meaningless. I'd rather give it to someone who, ya know, it's meaningful. It's disrespectful to your significant other because ya know, that's my cum and you're giving it to hundreds of men!

She describes doing muscle exercises to “get [the orgasm] back in there!” if she feels close to orgasm with a client. For Aqua, this part of herself is not on the market at the brothel and is reserved for a “significant other.” At one point, she described her vagina as a “treasure box,” and expressed remorse for “selling it young.” Aqua has internalized whore stigma and refers to a part of herself as being “sold.” When she says “what we were discussion' the other day, with

the red roses,” she’s referring to brothel folklore that says red roses signify love, and so they are bad luck in a brothel, which is a place for sex, not love and romance. She feels that her orgasm is meaningful and that it would disrespect her significant other to share it with others; she saves it for her partner who gets her authentic self. She is playing the whore at work, an identity that she has constructed for the brothel but remains a “good girl” at home by reproducing gender norms in line with monogamous heterosexual relationships.

London, a multi-racial PSE worker in her early 20s tells me that she has never experienced pleasure with a client and that she thinks of the money when she is with clients. She draws strict boundaries between her work self and her authentic self, and like Aqua, plays the bad girl in the brothel but strives to be the good girl at home. London describes to me what she does before going home to her husband:

I feel like I have to clean myself, mentally and my body too before I go home. I feel dirty, I was just as a job where I have sex with other men. I always use a douche before I go home to him.

She describes doing something to cleanse herself that is irrational in nature because it will not undo the sex she had with clients, and she acknowledged that she knew this. However, it made her feel better to have a ritual in which she did something to signify leaving her work self and transitioning back to her authentic self. She judges herself for having sex with other men outside of her relationship, reproducing gender role norms and also buying into whore stigma by describing herself as “dirty.”

Mary Lane, a White worker in her late 20s, provides GFE, PSE, and fetish to her clients, although charges more for GFE and engages in more PSE parties. When asked if she experiences pleasure with her clients and how it compares to sex in her personal life, she explains

I never cum for tricks, I don't. Because yeah, I'm always a domme with guys other than the dude I'm with and I would not have sex like that in the brothel for a job. This is how I make money; this is not sex. Straight up.

Mary Lane is referring to her boyfriend and their sexual dynamic; she is his submissive. This is "real sex" to her, something she only does with somebody she is in a relationship with. By comparison, the sex that she has for work is not real sex; it is how she makes her money and she denies experiencing sexual pleasure at work. She makes sure to convey that she does not experience pleasure with clients, as do many providers who demarcate certain acts as off-limits at work. This speaks to her need to present herself to others as disconnected from sex with clients. She presents sex at work as something she does - not as who she is. Perhaps this was the narrative that Mary Lane created to help her manage the stigma, both external and internal, of being a sex worker while in a romantic relationship. Some workers decide to market themselves as providers of the porn star experience simply because they refuse to provide kissing as part of their service. They draw boundaries by making decisions about what they will not provide.

Margaret, a woman of color in her early 20s, said 'I market [myself] as [providing the] porn star experience because I don't kiss, I don't do GFE.' During interviews, these workers were clear and precise about their feelings on GFE, often conveying a disgust for activities such as kissing and cuddling. These sentiments were often shared outside of the interviews as well in conversations amongst workers.

PSE and Age

80% of the non-GFE/PSE workers in my sample were in their early 30s or younger. As previously discussed, older women gravitate towards the GFE, perhaps because of an

association between older age and the mind versus the body. Most of the non-GFE/PSE workers were in the younger age brackets, perhaps because of gendered notions about young bodies and sexiness.

Since younger workers were more likely to be there for purely financial reasons, they may have preferred shorter sessions in comparison to lengthy GFE sessions that sometimes last for several hours or even days. Although GFE parties are more profitable, they require more emotional labor, which would be easier to perform if one found intrinsic value in the job versus pure financial value.

Conclusions

In this chapter I discussed the ways that PSE providers discuss their work, construct their identities and draw boundaries, and how these reflect intersectional dynamics. Workers who perform the PSE discuss their work in terms of physical acts in a way that reproduces mind/body dualism and classism. The PSE carries with it the stigma of dirty work, and it was common for workers to use words associated with immorality or filth to describe it; an expression of their own internalized whore stigma and reflection of class dynamics. They do not describe it as part of their personhood as GFE providers do. The pornstar experience is not a part of the worker's identity, but rather something she does for money. Workers manufacture boundaries by creating a work self to separate their work from their authentic self, reproducing mind/body dualism in how they talk about their work. Many discuss themselves in terms of "good girls" and "bad girls", setting up a dichotomy where they are bad girls in the brothel but good girls at home with their partners. This manufactured self helps them to feel faithful to their partners, whom they save certain acts for. Some also discussed the refusal of pleasure with clients as a way to mark boundaries and preserve gender role norms in their home lives.

These boundaries rely on gendered norms of females as prudish and are also heteronormative in how they value monogamy. Lastly, the majority of PSE providers were in their early 30s and younger, reproducing stereotypes of young bodies as sexy.

Chapter 7

Autoethnography

Introduction

In this chapter I will discuss why I chose to be a PSE provider and how I performed it, including how I constructed boundaries and how they reflected intersectional dynamics. I will explore the intersection of my identities- student and sex worker- and how my dual identities affected me both in the brothel and in academia. I will also explore the role of my whiteness and class privilege in my decisions about rates and also in my interactions with other workers.

My Identity Construction as a PSE Provider

I advertised as a PSE and BDSM/fetish provider. Although I came from a place of privilege and education, I was drawn to body labor versus emotional labor. I knew from the start that I would not succeed as a GFE provider, primarily because of my beliefs about sex and intimacy- a result of a Latin Catholic upbringing- but also because of my prior experience in the sex industry and my age. My preconceived notions about what men wanted in a brothel also played a role in how I marketed myself.

How I Constructed and Performed PSE

I define the pornstar experience as a high-energy and performative sex act, with loud moans, multiple positions, deep-throating, and other acts common in pornography, performed by a sexually aggressive woman in lingerie. The pornstar experience may also involve toys such as dildos and vibrators- props in the performance. This performance felt natural to me given my past experience as a webcam girl. I had been performing on camera for years, faking orgasms, exaggerating my movements, talking dirty, using toys, and wearing elaborate outfits. I brought these same toys and outfits with me to the brothel and transformed myself

into a PSE provider. This is primarily what I performed in the brothel, along with some light Dominatrix work, which was also divorced from the type of intimacy I associated with kissing and cuddling.

As someone who is not naturally dominant in their personal sex life, I enjoyed playing a Dominatrix because it was even more performative for me, and therefore felt completely inauthentic. I was able to put on a show and make money in a way that felt like I wouldn't compromise myself by letting the client get to know the "real" me. I preferred shorter sessions, usually assuming the session to be over once the client orgasmed so I didn't have to spend time with them after. I always felt impressed with myself when a client booked an hour but was in and out of my room in 20 minutes. Like many other body practitioners in the brothel, I wanted the most amount of money for the least amount of time spent with the client.

The Role of My Upbringing in the Construction of My Sex Worker Self

I attribute a large part of my decision to provide PSE instead of GFE to my heteronormative relationship values, which placed a premium on "saving oneself" for a romantic partner. These values were shaped by my upbringing. My family is from Portugal and Brazil, and I am a first generation Latina from a middle-class Catholic family. My father immigrated to the United States in his mid-20s, and my mother was 9 years old. They met in the US in 1984 and I was born in December of 1985. My father was the only man that my mother ever had sex with, and she waited until she was engaged to lose her virginity. She lived at home with her parents until she was married. This was the norm for Portuguese women, to save oneself for marriage and to go from living with family to living with a husband. My father had not "saved himself," on the contrary he dated many women and had been married once before for a brief period of time. However, this did not violate any gender norms; it was

acceptable for men to have multiple sexual partners but women were supposed to remain chaste. My parents hoped that I would follow a similar path as my mother and tried to instill these same values in me. We attended Portuguese church, and I went through all of the Catholic ceremonies from baptism to confirmation. I grew up with children from other Portuguese immigrant families, whose parents were also still married and who lived traditional middle-class lives in the suburbs of Connecticut. When I reached early adolescence, I started to rebel against my upbringing, asking members of my church why women could not be priests, and asking my mother why women were supposed to wait until marriage to have sex, but not men. When I was 14, my mother uncovered a journal of mine in which I wrote that I might be bisexual, and at 22 my mother discovered that I was pregnant and planning to have an abortion. These are both very vivid memories for me; my mother was shocked, angry, and disappointed. I was transgressing gender role norms for a Latin woman, and I was brash and unashamed. My mother, although well-meaning and generally very loving, called me a slut when she found out I was no longer a virgin. In my early 20s she found out that I was a webcam model and this was met with absolute horror. She kept almost all of these incidents from my father, who she feared would be too hurt by my choices. In her mind, being a sex worker meant that I had a spoiled identity, and she worried that no respectable man would want to marry me. These values were ingrained in her, and although I clearly went a different route, on some level they became part of my identity as well.

My beliefs about what men want as well as my age also factored into my decision to provide PSE. Prior to actually working there, I assumed men went there primarily for sex. Given the popularity of the GFE, I realized sex was only a fraction of the equation, and this surprised me. I associated brothels with wild sex, not long conversations and cuddling. Not

only was I more comfortable with PSE, but I also felt I would make the most money performing it. This quickly changed, but nonetheless I remained a PSE provider because of my heteronormative values, but also my age. I associated youth with sex appeal, reproducing gendered views about women, age, and sexiness. I was in my late 20s when I started this study and associated young women with sex, not with the GFE. When I crossed over into my 30s I lied about my age and continued to advertise as in my 20s. Even though I saw that many men wanted the GFE, I knew there was still a market for the guys who wanted the sexuality of the PSE, and many of these men were younger than the clients who sought out the GFE. I knew there were men who wanted the frills of the lingerie and high heels over the intimacy of conversation, and as a young slender woman with large breasts and a history of webcam work, I felt that I fit the role.

Navigating Dual Identities

I felt that I fit the role of a PSE provider, but what did it mean to suddenly have this new identity, and how did my sex worker self intersect with my graduate student self? Choosing to become a member of the group that I was studying gave me the advantages that an insider would have; easy access to participants, experiential knowledge, but also presented me with a new identity. First, I will explore how the intersection of these identities, student and sex worker, impacted me in the brothel following discussion of how they impacted me in academia.

Intersecting Identities in the Brothel: My Preconceived Notions About Sex Work and Class

In my first couple of trips to the brothel I was hyper-aware of my status as a graduate student. I was afraid of how other workers would treat me once they found out that I was a

student and researcher. I worried that the women would dismiss me as a privileged fraud; someone who did not need to be there but chose to in order to complete a project. Being a student was at first a source of embarrassment for me. I wondered if they would resent me for having other sources of income and view me as someone taking clients from them for a frivolous reason. My assumption that the women would not respect my academic project was itself marked by classist stereotypes about sex workers as uneducated. I assumed they would see my project as frivolous and dismiss me for being a student, when in reality the majority of the workers I interviewed expressed interest in my study and provided me with positive feedback. They told me that they were happy that somebody was “finally studying it from the inside,” and that they were frustrated with stereotypes about prostitution. Some participants discussed their academic degrees and/or future academic plans with me. Rather than being negatively judged for being an outsider, I was welcomed as somebody who could bring about positive change for sex workers.

I was forthcoming to the sex workers with whom I worked that this was my first time doing full-service sex work. One of the house moms used to joke that I was “almost a real ho” when she would hear me share stories about clients with other workers. I was “almost” because I was from a different world, middle class and in academia. The underlying assumption being that “hos” are from a lower class. I wanted to fit in and be seen as a “real ho,” so if I was with workers that I was still getting to know, I would not overly-emphasize that I was a student. They knew, but I did not position myself as primarily an academic, but rather, would discuss my past experiences in other facets of sex work. I was trying to disguise my class in an effort to fit in, which I learned was not always warranted because there were other workers with advanced degrees.

Competition for Clients & Class Privilege

One of my concerns was that other workers would resent me for being somebody who did not need the income from the brothel but was taking clients anyway. I was in direct competition with the other workers yet wanted them to trust me enough to open up to me in interviews. I generally felt more comfortable interviewing GFE providers because I made it clear that I did not provide GFE, and so I was able to ask probing questions by playing on my naivety of the service. This backfired when I interviewed a GFE provider approximately an hour before my first ever GFE session. I had been conducting my research for over a year and decided that providing GFE would provide me with an entire new depth of knowledge about the service. I had known my interviewee since the start of my research and was comfortable asking in-depth questions about her marketing, including her thoughts on what made her a successful GFE provider. During the interview, she shared information about her rate. When she found out that I provided a GFE service that evening for lower than her rate, she became angry and accused me of interviewing her to get information to undercut her. Although I explained that it was not my intention to do so, we had a tense relationship from that day forth. My status as a student handicapped me in my relationship to her, providing a potential cover for ulterior motives.

Being a student and having outside sources of income gave me the privilege to walk away from clients that were not willing to pay my rate. If I really needed the money, I would have had to negotiate my boundaries and lower my rate in order to accommodate more clients. Instead, I could be “low volume:” charge more and make the same amount of money seeing fewer clients. My privilege outside of the brothel put me in a position of privilege inside of the brothel, and upon reflection, I have become aware of how this influenced how I viewed fellow

workers who charged less. I judged them and felt that their lower rates would bring down the value of the house, a sentiment shared by some of the other workers with higher than average rates. As I spent more time in the brothel and more enmeshed in my identity as a brothel sex worker, making good money became more important to me, and this increased my competitive nature. The one fight that I had with another worker was over pricing, after I felt she undercut me and stole a potential client. A man picked me out of line-up, and as I took his hand and was leading him to my room for negotiations, a worker who was late to line-up ran up to us and introduced herself to him. This was wildly inappropriate according to the rules of the brothel; workers were not allowed to speak to a client after he picked a worker and were supposed to wait until they were in the room before leaving line-up. This was an example of what workers and management called “dirty hustling,” using unfair means to secure a session with a client. I was annoyed when she did this but said nothing and continued with the client to my room. After I told him my rate, he said that he did not have that much money and asked me if I knew the rate of the worker who had interrupted our walk to my room. I felt angry and convinced that he would have paid me what I asked, had she not interfered and given him an opportunity to potentially pay less. I knew that she would routinely charge rates lower than what the rest of the workers deemed acceptable; we had an unspoken house minimum of \$300 that we had agreed upon. My class privilege reared its ugly head when I bitterly told the client that if he were interested in seeing her, he was not the type of client for me, and told him to go speak to her instead. She booked with him and after he left, I approached her about her “dirty hustling,” which led to a screaming match in which I insulted her rates. We both later apologized to one another and I came to genuinely like her, and I reflected on the incident. Although she was wrong in her attempt to take a client from me after he had picked me from

line-up, my privileged views about race caused me to react negatively to both her and the client. Looking back, it was none of my business what she or any other worker charged, but it became hard to see this when my identity as a sex worker was at the forefront coupled with my class privilege.

Navigating a Dual Identity In Academia

In this section I will explain how the intersection of my identities, student and sex worker, reflected intersectional dynamics in academia. I was in a position of privilege at UNLV, being out about my identity as a sex worker prior to beginning this dissertation and of course forthcoming about my study when I began working in the brothel. Professors and other graduate students knew that I was working as a sex worker, but rather than stigmatizing me, they were accepting and interested in my study. I attribute this to being in a sex worker friendly program where other students were also sex workers, many working with professors that studied sex work. However, despite the accepting atmosphere, I believe I would have faced some scrutiny and judgement if I were working there solely for the money and not as part of my dissertation. Some of my colleagues asked invasive questions about my other sex worker jobs with a voyeuristic curiosity but spoke of my dissertation in academic terms. They were curious about life in the brothel, but questions usually had an academic bent to them, unlike questions about webcamming and fetish work. Whereas my identity as a student did little to help me fit into the brothel, my dual identity as a sex worker/student garnered me some clout in academia as an ethnographer. This status was protective against stigma, both in academia and in my everyday life. I was not *just* a sex worker; I was a sex worker *and* a researcher. My research served as a justification for working there. This dynamic reflects the class privilege of being a student and how this privilege served to legitimize and sanitize my

sex work.

My beliefs about gender, class, and sex played a pivotal role in how I spoke about my study with peers and professors. When I was asked about pleasure with clients, I made it very clear that I experienced none, and I would volunteer this information even when I was not asked. It was important for me to be regarded primarily as a professional and not as a sex worker. I felt that to experience pleasure and orgasm with clients would delegitimize my study and make me less of a professional. This was predicated on beliefs of sex as dirty and prostitution as immoral. It also reflects gendered beliefs about women and promiscuity; that a woman who orgasms with strangers is a slut. I bought into whore stigma without realizing it at the time. If I enjoyed sex with clients, people may think of me as somebody doing it for sex in addition to research, and I feared this would damage the reputation I was trying to build. Instead of being a researcher, I would be a whore, transgressing gender roles and positioning myself as a woman with no class. This was reinforced by the fact that I was married and already transgressing heteronormative ideals. One of the most common questions people would ask was “how does your husband feel about this?” and I would cringe every time.

Reflections on my Dual Identities

There is a bond that forms among women who are living and working in the same brothel together; a function of time spent together as well as the shared stigma of doing dirty work. We were essentially roommates for the duration of our stays, eating most meals together, doing our make-up in each other's rooms, watching movies in the parlor together on slow evenings, and skinny dipping together late at night after we were done seeing clients. I have fond memories of staying up many late nights in the backyard with my fellow workers as we smoked cigarettes, drank wine, traded stories about our day, and bonded over a shared

stigma. Because of the close experiences I shared with other workers, I was always a little depressed in my first few days back home. Shifting from sex worker to wife/student was not easy for me, and perhaps the problem is that I felt that I needed to shift at all. My identities were not stand-alone but intersecting. The way I compartmentalized helped me to differentiate between a work self and an authentic self, but it also made my transitions back home more difficult.

When I went back to the home I shared with my husband and dog after a 12 day tour, I sprawled on the couch, depressed, missing the brothel and feeling out of place in my own home. I was away from women who understood what it was like to bear whore stigma. Was I just a doctoral researcher, or was I a sex worker? I was both; was I more one than the other? I had a difficult time coming to terms with the reality of my intersecting identities. Had I violated some ethical code by becoming too friendly with participants? How was I to deal with this burden of sadness that I felt after finishing another tour? Ultimately, I rested on the fact that I was both, and there are no clear-cut answers to my questions. By conducting this ethnography, I was afforded a type of access that none before me had obtained in the Nevada brothels, and I also changed in a way that none before me had changed. I sold sexual services for money; I bared the burden of sex worker stigma much more so than I had before as a webcam model. Not only was I performing on screen, but now I was having sex with clients. I was overtly transgressing gender and class boundaries, and my decision to be a full service sex worker was met with more shock than my decision to be a webcam model, which incidentally I always described as a way to pay for school, and was becoming more mainstream in popular culture. These factors and the lack of physical contact with clients shielded me from the whore stigma that I faced as a full service sex worker. I had transitioned

from a student who occasionally performed on cam to a full-blown fullservice sex worker. It was both an advantage and a stain on my character; forever a “prostitute.” When my husband and I split up, my mother would ask me how I would explain this project to future romantic partners. At the time it seemed like such a silly question, but she had a valid point. I would forever be tainted with the stigma of full-service sex work, but I had an out that my participants did not have- I could say I was “just doing it for research,” just as other women said that they were doing it for a book or other “respectable” reasons. My privilege elevated my position in the brothel in terms of my earning potential, and also served to lessen the stigma aftermy time in the brothel had passed. I would never truly experience the full weight of the stigma ofprostitution because of this “loophole” I had. I could theorize all day, but I still did not know what it was like to have to have sex with a stranger to pay my rent, and I would never bare the full burden of that stigma.

Transgression and Acceptance of Gender Role Norms as a PSE Provider

I constructed my boundaries in accordance with my views on intimacy which were predicated on the fact that certain acts were reserved for my romantic partner. These views stemfrom gender role norms of women as prudish and monogamous. My upbringing is the only way that I can explain my heteronormative gendered relationship views; the premium I place on monogamy and my discomfort with being in a romantic relationship while performing sex work.I even remember when I first started webcam work I actually worried that no “normal” guy would date me if he found out what I did for work. After some time in the industry I realized how absurd this was, and that my mother was wrong. I was in graduate school, meeting people from all walks of life with different value systems, and yet, even as I write this, I feel a certain way about women who are in relationships and doing full-service

sex work. It is uncomfortable to admit that I reserve judgment for them and wonder how they can feel comfortable having sex with another man while their partner is at home. While my rational brain knows that this discomfort is misguided and unfair, it is a deeply imbedded reaction. When I got home to my husband after working in the brothel, I felt dirty. Even though he accepted what I did and never insulted me because of it, I felt like a bad wife, a bad woman. In fact, his lack of disgust at what I was doing caused me to resent him, even though I told him at the start of the study that he had to accept my decision or leave me. The traditional values I was raised with distorted the ways that I perceived myself, other women, and sex outside of marriage. In my mind, having sex with other men was bad enough; kissing them would be unthinkable.

My lips were a bodily exclusion zone, and in my entire time in the brothels I only kissed a few clients; those who were willing to pay a large premium to include kissing in our session. I watched other women make great money as GFE providers, and the brothels marketed the GFE as a main attraction. Daniel Hart, the owner of the brothel in which I worked, promotes the girlfriend experience in all his brothels. A pamphlet for another brothel indicates, "Home of the REAL Girlfriend Experience! It's all of the perks...but NONE of the problems". The inside of the pamphlet reads "Imagine a girl you can truly be yourself around. A lady you can share your erotic desires and intimate moments with. Someone who is always happy to see you; accepts you for who you are, as you are and is waiting to fulfill your every need -- physical, emotional, sexual...with no strings attached!" I could not tolerate the thought of pretending to be someone's girlfriend, of kissing and sharing fluids with my clients. Oral was covered by condoms and dental dams, and the thought of giving a stranger my bodily fluids made me queasy, a visceral reaction to a kiss. I felt that if I saved certain acts for my

relationship- kissing, cuddling, sleeping next to someone- that I was redeemable. I held onto these beliefs even after my husband and I dissolved our marriage and I became single. In some ways I was “saving myself” for the next guy, as my mother had “saved herself” for my father.

I also withheld my orgasm, even in instances where I began to feel aroused. I would immediately turn it off; I have never orgasmed with a client. This lack of authentic pleasure helped alleviate my internal shame about having sex outside of my marriage. It was also very important to me to let others, including my husband, know my feelings on the issue. I justified the sex outside of my marriage as a means to an end, an academic pursuit of knowledge. Like many of the other younger body practitioners in the house, there was no place for my own sexual pleasure in my experience. For me, orgasm is relational, and transcendent (Brents, Jackson, & Hausbeck, 2009). It is not something that I am willing to share in the market, and rather than viewing it as an issue of “can’t orgasm,” I believe it is that I do not want to orgasm. This would violate the gendered values I held about how a woman should behave while married. I was transgressing gender role norms by selling sex and by providing the most sexualized performance, but also acquiescing to them by creating boundaries that would make me a “good girl” at home.

As I noted earlier in the section, the sale of sex and performance of PSE transgresses gender role norms, and while part of me acquiesced to norms, part of me enjoyed the taboo. Sometimes these transgressions made me feel like I was in control, rather than the client. I perceived a power differential with the client as in control because he was paying, when in fact, I was always in control of what happened during a session. Nonetheless, I sensed and resented a power differential, but the transgression of gender role norms made me feel more powerful. In these field notes, I write about taking a client’s virginity:

The virgin! I think he fell in love! God help me. He cuddled me and now I want to burn my skin off. Time to exfoliate. (Field notes 1/12/14)

It was written in a joking manner, and he was perfectly pleasant, even sweet. He asked if he could take a photo with me after, and I agreed. I smiled at myself on his cell phone's screen as he took a "selfie", both of us dressed and with my arm around him. I felt that my posture showed that I owned him, I took his virginity. I enjoyed this feeling; I felt masculine. In my traditional femininity as a sex worker in a heteronormative brothel, I took a man's virginity, subverting the roles and being the experienced seductress instead of the fumbling adolescent. I had the experience, and he did not, and this transgression of gender norms made me feel powerful.

Pricing the PSE

I priced sex acts and types of sex differently, something that I noticed some of the other workers also did, but not all. The other body practitioners were also more likely to do this, rather than to give one set price for an hour (or however long) with everything included (hand stimulation, oral, intercourse). The GFE providers were more likely to just have one price and focus less on the transactional aspect. I refused to do more work for the same amount of money. For example, intercourse would be the most expensive act with me, with a blowjob being considerably less expensive. I found oral sex to be very easy and less intimate than penetrative sex; the client had less access to my body, there was less eye-contact, and less opportunity for them to try to kiss me. It was easier, mindless, and over quickly. Sex required my entire body, access to my insides. There would be considerably more contact, and more worries; having enough condoms, making sure it does not slip off (or that the client does not try to pull it off without my knowledge). In my case, intercourse required more labor, both

physically and mentally, and therefore it was more expensive. I had to perform the mental labor of disconnecting from the sex act. I would run through to-do lists in my mind while having sex, a complete mind/body dualism where my body was present but my mind was somewhere else entirely. This was part of how I maintained boundaries and compartmentalized work life and home life, and it was more important for me to do this during intercourse because I felt that I was more exposed and vulnerable than during oral sex. This demonstrates the premium I placed on protecting the mind and the value of the mind versus the body, a denigration of body labor.

Whiteness, Cultural Capital, and Pricing

I saw my first client for \$300 because I was more concerned with getting it over with than making money. I was incredibly nervous and wanted my first out of the way, so I accepted a rate that I would never accept again. I was disappointed in myself after that first party. I felt I was worth much more money than that, but why did I evaluate myself in this way? Based on what? How did I learn to price and commodify my own body? The construction of prices is another way to craft boundaries and is of course influenced by the social environment of the brothel; what the other women are charging. Just as hegemonic standards of beauty are socially constructed, so too is the notion of what a woman is “worth” for sex, typically constructed by comparisons to other women in the house, advice from managers, and notions of being expensive versus cheap; desperate versus not. I learned in later ethnographic work that it also depends on the brothel. The house in which I worked has a minimum rate for sex (not publicly discussed, only known amongst management and the other working girls), and I always thought of this as the bottom of the barrel price. This is what I charged my first time: \$300. I knew that I could make more than that, and listened to what

other women were charging. I took that number and added a few hundred. I was genuinely curious as to whether or not guys would pay my rate, and why not ask? One can always negotiate down, but not up. Also, I reasoned that if a guy would be willing to pay \$800 for sex and he really desired the service, he would spring for \$1000 if need be. This was not always the case, but oftentimes, it was. I would wonder- is the client really going to drive all the way home with nothing, settle for another service provider at a lower rate, or choose me? I was able to test this because of my class privilege; having other sources of income and never having worked illegally prior, but also because I looked White. Although I identify as Latin, I pass for White and in the brothel, as in pornography, stripping, and other forms of sex work, White women can charge more for their services. However, I could also market myself as a “busty Latina” when it suited me, making myself into an “exotic” PSE provider. Along with the ability to change my race and ethnicity whenever I wanted, I also had the cultural capital of a graduate education, which I believe raised my market value. This cultural capital enabled me to hold conversations on a wide variety of topics with clients from all socioeconomic backgrounds. When clients asked about my background, I shared with them that I was from Connecticut and had a master’s degree. I worked the student angle which I found that men love; beyond just the “naughty schoolgirl” fantasy they feel as though they are investing in something positive when they pay a student.

Pricing & Negotiation of Boundaries

When I later offered the GFE for a higher rate, I judged myself for it. On what I knew would be my final stay at Bettie’s Cathouse I decided to provide a GFE party with kissing. I wanted to experience my discomfort in an effort to better understand the origins of it; why I could provide oral sex on a stranger with no hesitancy but the thought of kissing repulsed

me. I was presented with the perfect opportunity during a negotiation with a client that specified that kissing was important to him. He wore nice clothing and spoke as someone who likely had formal education so I made the decision to ask him for more than most men were willing to pay for an hour at Bettie's Cathouse. My usual goal for an hour that included intercourse was \$1000, but I started the negotiation at \$2000 with this client. I told him that my usual hour was \$1000, but that the GFE party he was seeking would be \$2000. He said yes and I was shocked; I was able to double my rate just by adding kissing and cuddling to what I typically provided, and the client understood how much more he was paying. The fact that I was white-passing and educated(I routinely advertised as a graduate student, "naughty school girl") may have contributed to his decision to pay more. These characteristics of privilege increased my market value, just as Whitewomen make more money in other sectors of the industry such as stripping and webcam work.

When we kissed, I closed my eyes and felt grossed out but I pushed through it and made out with him multiple times during the session. The exchange of bodily fluids disgusted me; there is no other type of fluid exchange permitted in the brothel. I also felt a sense of sadness for betraying my values, but thrilled with the money, and that was enough incentive for me to see him once more the following week. I felt the same way the second time, that I was giving away a part of myself that should belong to my romantic partner, reinforcing mind/body dualism and gender role norms. I was playing the "good girl" in the brothel, but felt like a whore at home.

That being said, if I could go back I would do it all over again because the money made it worth it, and this tension between my boundaries and my desire to make money was something I had grown accustomed to. Additionally, being paid such a high rate made me feel

good about myself and increased my classist judgmental thoughts about workers who charged less.

Conclusions

In this chapter I discussed why I chose to be a PSE provider, how I performed it, how I constructed boundaries, and how these boundaries reflected intersectional dynamics. I explored how my dual identities as student and sex worker affected me in the brothel and in academia, as well as the role of my whiteness and privilege in decision-making about my rates.

I chose to be a PSE provider because I could not handle the amount of emotional labor required of the GFE, and also because I wanted to “save” certain parts of myself for my husband. I marketed myself as a “busty Latina” student, using my education as a marker of class privilege and reproducing stereotypes of Latin women as hyper-sexual. However, I benefited from looking White, commanding a high rate, and because of my privilege I was able to be picky and turn away clients. Like many other PSE workers, I constructed a work self to help me cope with the whore stigma that related to being a sex worker while married. I felt guilty about sex with other men, a result of a traditional Catholic Latin upbringing. I did not distance from sex like GFE providers, but rather played the “bad girl” in the brothel while trying to be the “good girl” at home. I created bodily exclusion zones, saving acts such as kissing for my husband, playing out gendered heterosexual relationship norms.

My intersecting identities of student and sex worker caused me to worry about how others perceived me, both in the brothel where I felt like an outsider, and in academia where I felt like a whore. It was important to me that my professors and peers take me seriously, and so I went out of my way to let them know that I did not experience sexual pleasure with clients. I

feared pleasure would invalidate my study and that being seen as a sexual being would cause people to lose respect for me. I wanted my primary identity to be that of a student and reflected class dynamics in how I talked about my study, making sure people knew it was “just for research.” I also reproduced gender role norms of women as prudish, positioning female sexuality as something to be ashamed of. Although I went along with gender norms in some ways, I also transgressed them by positioning myself as sexually dominant in relation to my maleclients, rather than submissive as norms dictate a woman should be.

Chapter 8

Conclusions

This dissertation explored how different performances of commodified intimacy in Nevada brothels reflect intersectional dynamics, as well as how management reproduces systems of oppression in how they value different performances, workers, and the brothels themselves.

Although much research has explored commodified intimacy across particular settings, there is much less attention given to diversity in how performances of intimacy may differ amongst workers within the same or similar work environments.

Workers in the brothels, regardless of their marketing, generally have the same goal of catering to the desires of heterosexual men. Both PSE and GFE workers have found ways to commodify recreational sex, but have done so in different ways, and choose their performance based on their privileges and ideas about gender, recreational and relational sex, intimacy, and how they situate their own race, class, and gender in these performances. This research is important because the choices and constraints in which performance to provide impacts work conditions in various ways, such as income, how workers are treated by management, and how they experience their work. Understanding differences in performances also adds to the literature on boundary-making, since workers construct their boundaries in different ways, often dependent upon intersectional dynamics and inequalities.

To explore this topic, I conducted an ethnography of five Nevada's legal brothels, in two of which I was a participant observer, and interviewed 50 sex workers. I focused on the two most commonly marketed performances of commodified intimacy in the brothels, the

girlfriend experience and pornstar experience, and how workers talked about each. I also observed day today life in the brothels, including relationships between management and workers.

Management sent the workers who they thought had the highest earning potential- those who reproduced heterosexual gendered performances of whiteness via the GFE- to the Red Light Ranch, the “elite” suburban brothel. Management used slogans for the Red Light Ranch such as “not just sex- it’s an adventure” to highlight the emotional labor in the girlfriend experience and distance from the sex act, which is considered to be dirty and of a lower class. Historically, stereotypes of hypersexuality and promiscuity have been linked to Black and Latina women, but the GFE is divorced from sex, thus linked to whiteness. The rural brothels had more women of color working in them, and unfortunately for them, less money-making opportunities in comparison to the suburban brothels. Women who had previously worked as criminalized sex workers were less likely to be hired at the Red Light Ranch, demonstrating management’s association with sex work to immorality. This affected workers of color who were more likely to have worked illegally in the past, perpetuating a cycle of oppression. In terms of the performances, GFE providers discussed their work as a holistic experience of mind and body, and linked it to their personhood. Both GFE and PSE providers reproduced gender role norms, but in different ways. GFE providers reproduced gender role norms by being nurturing of their clients and distanced from the sex act by comparing their work to respectable professions and focusing on their education, markers of class privilege. By doing this, GFE providers also distanced from whore stigma- the stigma of selling sex, the ultimate taboo for women and transgression of gender roles. GFE workers also focused on the relational aspect of their work, associating unrestrained recreational sex with

low class, which cannot be divorced from racial dynamics. Historically, sex had by White women is seen as restrained, relational, and therefore of a higher class than the recreational sex had by Black and Latina women, who are stereotyped as hyper-sexual. Although GFE providers distanced themselves from the sex act, many reported that they experience sexual pleasure with clients. GFE providers professionalized and took pride in their work, presumably making it more enjoyable.

Older workers overwhelmingly gravitated towards the GFE, while most PSE workers were younger, reproducing stereotypes about age and sexiness. Several GFE providers in their 40s and 50s told me that they were doing the work for reasons other than financial, reflecting class privilege that was absent in most PSE providers. Some reasons for working in the brothel included desire for sexual pleasure, exploring one's sexuality, and to obtain material for a book.

PSE providers primarily described their work in terms of physical acts; types of sex, moaning loudly, sex in different positions, reflecting body labor versus the emotional labor that characterizes the GFE. They also used words such as "nasty," "naughty," and "slutty" to describe their performance. This speaks to the devaluing of body labor and the perception that hypersexual women are "bad women." PSE is characterized by recreational sex, versus relational, and in line with gender stereotypes, only "bad women" enjoy promiscuous sex. Hypersexuality has been historically linked to women of color, and body labor associated with service labor done by immigrant women. Not surprisingly, the PSE generates less income than the GFE, is less popular among clients, and receives less attention and marketing from brothel management. As previously noted, PSE workers reproduced gender role norms, but did so in different ways than GFE providers. PSE providers did not distance from sex at work, but they

acquiesced to heteronormative gender role norms by being “good girls” at home, despite being “bad girls” at work. They reproduced mind/body dualism and created a worker self, separate from their authentic self. They did this by constructing boundaries of a work self and saving certain acts, including their own pleasure, for their partners. This was a way of trying to distance from whore stigma and preserve heteronormative values. Additionally, male aggressive behavioris never mentioned in discussions of the GFE; the woman playing out the GFE is seen as a lovingand compassionate woman deserving of respect, whereas aggression is sometimes part of the PSE. In this way the PSE is a contradiction; it breaks from gendered expectations of good women as non-sexual and thus worthy of respect, while also conforming to the expectation that women are submissive to men. Providers of the GFE and PSE understood intimacy in different ways. For PSE providers, intimacy is characterized by certain physical acts that they “save” for their partners, whereas GFE providers say they offer an intimate experience for clients using their intellectual and emotional attributes. GFE providers have more fluid boundaries between the sex they have at work and sex they have in the personal lives. For GFE providers, intimacy can be with someone outside of a relationship and for PSE providers it is more often someone in a relationship and not at work. Their work selves/boundaries are determined by how they understand intimacy. As I have laid out, these performances of intimacy are infused with class, race and gendered ideologies and stereotypes, suggesting that intimacy itself is raced, gendered, and classed.

Reflections of my own time spent working in the brothel demonstrated how I crafted my identity as a PSE provider, how I constructed boundaries, and how I managed the dual identities of student and sex worker. My beliefs about sex were shaped by my upbringing in a Catholic immigrant family that valued heteronormative values such as monogamy. Much like

other PSE providers, I constructed a work self that was separate from my authentic self, whom I shared with my partner. I reserved certain acts for him and felt shame about being a married woman working in a brothel. Like other PSE providers, I played the “bad girl” in the brothel, playing up the hypersexual Latina stereotype, but was the “good girl” at home, falling in line with traditional gender role norms. My dual identities also caused me to have conflicted feelings, both inside the brothel and in academia. I was acutely aware of my privilege as a doctoral student who had other sources of income, unlike the other workers. I was able to turn away clients that I found undesirable more often than if I did not have this outside income. I was also able to use my cultural capital of being educated and White-passing to charge an above-average rate for the brothel in which I worked. Although in this way my dual identity served me well in the brothel, it caused me stress in academia, as I worried what others would think of me. I wanted to be taken seriously and worried that my status as a sex worker would take away from my credibility, so I minimized the role of pleasure in the work, making sure my colleagues knew that I was not enjoying the sex. Enjoyment of the sex would take away from the academic value of my work, and position me as a “slut” undeserving of respect. These gendered stereotypes about what constitutes a respectable woman influenced the ways in which I spoke about my sex work to others. Ultimately, although I was marked by whore stigma because of my work as a sex worker, I was shielded from its full magnitude by having the “protection” of being a student, of working there for research.

There are limitations to this research, primarily centering around the use of intersectionality as a methodology and its limitations. I discussed GFE and PSE as fixed identities, as either one or the other, when in reality workers can be flexible and change their marketing style any time they choose, even between clients. This is essentialist thinking that

Puar(2012) warns about and tries to remedy by adding the theory of assemblages to intersectionality. This research also ties PSE tightly to body labor and GFE to emotional labor, when in fact both performances employ both types of labor, but to varying degrees. Taking Cooper (2016) into account and recognizing that structural identity is not the same as personal identity, I realize that to some extent I unintentionally reified the categories of race, gender, and class. Future research should recognize that power and identity are not the same, and that the categories that affect sex workers' lives are multiple and complex. Additionally, my research shows that women of color were more likely to have a past of working illegally, which negatively affected management's decisions of where to place them. I should have probed more with managers about why they held those beliefs to understand how those who hold power use racist ideologies. Lastly, I did not take into account workers' sexual orientations, and focused on gender more than any other identity, falling into the trap of a gender-primary analysis (May, 2015). I recognize that the lives of sex workers are shaped by a wide range of practices that go far beyond the categories of race, gender, and class, and although scholars are only beginning to use intersectionality in sex work research, future research should take note of these complexities.

This dissertation adds to the literature on commodified intimacy by exploring diversity in how workers perform intimacy, and how these performances reflect race, class, and gendered dynamics. Because of the ways in which class and racial inequalities are magnified in sex work, workers would be best served if research about their lives continues to incorporate an intersectional framework to further our understanding of these inequalities, while taking the critiques of intersectionality into consideration. Only then can we work towards equitable ways to minimize these inequalities in the sex industry, and more broadly

service labor, to improve conditions for workers.

Appendix A: Interview Schedule

The following are the questions that I asked in each semi-structured interview, and depending on answers, I probed and asked other questions. Therefore, this is not an exhaustive list of all questions that were asked, but rather an outline of the basics of each interview.

Opening Questions

How old are you?

What do you identify your race to be? What is your sexual orientation?

Where are you from?

Where do you live now?

What is your marital status? (if married or partnered, ask how partner feels about their work, ask about their views on relationships and work, how do they identify (poly, monogamous, swinger, etc.))

Do you have children? (if yes, ask about ages, who the children live with)

What is your highest level of completed education?

What was your socioeconomic status growing up? What is your SES currently?

Brothel & Sex Work History

How long have you worked in the brothel?

How did you hear about the brothel?

What got you started working in the brothel?

Do you like working in the brothel? (probe further to discover what she enjoys, what she does not enjoy)

What other jobs have you worked in the sex industry? (probe about illegal work, advertising, how she secured clients, if she still works illegally in addition to brothel, if she has worked for an agency, if she has ever had a pimp? If yes to any, continue probing for more information).

Sex in the Brothel

What is sex to you in the brothel?

Is sex different in the brothel than in your personal life?

Do you orgasm with clients? (If yes/sometimes- what is it about the clients who make you orgasm? If no- why not?)

What is your ideal client/party?

What is your least favorite client/party?

Are there certain acts you will not provide in the brothel? Why?

What is your opinion of men who pay for sex?

Marketing

How do you market yourself in the brothel?

Do you have a niche?

How would you describe what a GFE session entails?

How would you describe what a PSE session entails?

Why do you think GFE is so popular?

Safety

Have you experienced any violence in the brothel?

Do you feel safe working here? Why or why not?

Stigma

Are you out to your family/friends about your work?

Does the stigma of sex work stigma affect your life? How?

How do you handle the stigma of working a job that society looks down on?

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Woodward, C., Fischer, J., Najman, J., & Dunne, M. (2004). Selling sex in Queensland 2003.

Curriculum Vitae

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CONTACT INFORMATION

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EDUCATION

- 2013-2021 Ph.D., Sociology
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
- 2009- 2011 M.A., Clinical Psychology
University of Hartford, West Hartford, Connecticut
- 2003-2008 B.A., Psychology
University of Connecticut, West Hartford, Connecticut

AWARDS AND HONORS

- May 2016 University of Nevada, Las Vegas: Public Sociology Award.
- March 2016 University of Nevada, Las Vegas: Graduate & Professional Student Association. \$800 travel grant to present original data at American Association of Geographers Annual Conference.
- July 2015 University of Nevada, Las Vegas: College of Liberal Arts Summer Research Grant. \$3000 to support summer ethnographic research of Nevada brothels.
- Sept. 2014 University of Nevada, Las Vegas: Graduate & Professional Student Association. \$500 travel grant to present original data at 11th Annual Human Trafficking, Prostitution, & Sex Work Conference.
- 2011-2014 University of Hartford Diversity Fellowship. \$4000 tuition reimbursement per academic year.
- March 2013 University of Hartford Travel Grant. \$500 to present at Association of Women in Psychology conference.
- March 2013 University of Hartford Women for Change. Scholarship to cover travel expenses to present at Association of Women in Psychology conference.

PUBLICATIONS

Spivak, A., Brents, B., Yamashita, T., Parreira, C. & Lanti, A. (2020). Are Sex Buyers Sexist? Comparing Client Attitudes on Gender Role Equality in Different Prostitution *Markets*.

BOOK CHAPTERS

Parreira, C. (In press). Tumbleweeds and Titillation: Selling Sex in the Nevada Desert. In *Navigating Contemporary Sex Work: Gender, Justice, and Policy*. Palgrave.

Parreira, C. (2021). The Lady and the Tramp: Construction and Management of Stigma in the Nevada Brothel. In *Reconfiguring Stigma in Studies of Sex For Sale*. Routledge.

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

- March 2016 *American Association of Geographers Annual Conference*
Title: Consuming Sexscapes: The Impact of Location and Legality on Prostitution Clients. Presented with Dr. Barb Brents.
San Francisco, CA.
- April 2015 *American Association of Geographers Annual Conference*
Title: Ethnographic reflections on selling sex in the Nevada desert.
Chicago, IL.
- April 2015 *Troubling prostitution: Exploring intersections of sex, intimacy, and labour*
Title: Bodies at work: Body labor and work strategies in a Nevada brothel.
Vienna, Austria.
- Sept. 2014 *11th Annual Human Trafficking, Prostitution, & Sex Work Conference*
Title: Getting Inside: Firsthand Experience as a Worker in a Nevada Brothel.
Toledo, OH.
- Sept. 2014 *11th Annual Human Trafficking, Prostitution, & Sex Work Conference*
Title: Living Life as a Target: Bullying, Stigma, and Whorearchy
Toledo, OH.
- August 2014 *Society for the Study of Social Problems Conference*
Title: Our Bedrooms Are Our Stage: Selling Sex and Intimacy in the Nevada Brothel
San Francisco, CA.
- July 2013 *Desiree Alliance Conference: The Audacity of Health: Sex Work, Health, and Politics.*
Title: You Can't Rape a Whore: Rape Myths, Sexism, & Sex Work.
Las Vegas, Nevada.
- July 2013 *Desiree Alliance Conference: The Audacity of Health: Sex Work, Health, and Politics.*
Title: Sex Workers in Therapy: The Need for Understanding.
Las Vegas, Nevada.
- March 2013 *Association of Women in Psychology Conference*
Title: Sexism, Strippers, and Slut-Shaming.
Salt Lake City, Utah.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

May 2015-2019

Researcher

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Member of a research team collecting data on clients of both brothel and illegal prostitution.

Principal Investigators: Dr. Andrew Spivak & Dr. Barb

Brents January 2014- 2019

Principal Investigator

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Utilizing participant observation to collect qualitative data in a legal Nevada brothel.

September 2015-December 2015

Research Assistant

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Assisted Dr. Georgiann Davis in the editing of her book, *The Dubious Diagnoses*, on the topic of intersex medicalization and debates over necessity of surgeries on intersex youth.

September 2013- June 2014

Research Assistant

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Study

Duties: Conducted interviews with individuals who sell sex on the streets of Las Vegas- recruitment, admin, interviewer.

Principal Investigator: Andrew Spivak,

Ph.D. September 2012- December 2012

Research Assistant

University of Hartford, West Hartford, CT

Duties: Prepared Human Subjects Committee paperwork for a study comparing the susceptibility of different personality inventories to “faking good” response sets on personality inventories.

Principal Investigator: Peter Weiss,

Ph.D. July 2010 –May 2011

Research Assistant

Yale University, Departments of Psychiatry and Internal Medicine, Division of Substance Abuse, New Haven, CT

Engaging Methadone-Maintained Patients in Physical Exercise

Duties: Conducted clinical intakes and psychiatric research assessments regarding drug use, physical activity, and medication adherence.

Principal Investigator: Christopher J. Cutter,

Ph.D. July 2010 –May 2011

Research Assistant

Yale University, Departments of Psychiatry and Internal Medicine, Division of Substance Abuse, New Haven, CT

Counseling for Primary Care Office-Based Buprenorphine

Duties: Assisted with data collection by administration of structured assessments and self-report instruments to opioid dependent patients. *Principal Investigator:* David Fiellin, MD.

Sept. 2009 – May 2011

Research Assistant

University of Hartford, West Hartford, CT

Duties: Received training in cognitive behavioral therapy and hypnosis, measured reduction of experimental pain while utilizing psychological methods for pain reduction.

Principal Investigator: Len Milling,

Ph.D. Jan 2008- May 2008

Research Assistant

University of Connecticut, West Hartford, CT

Duties: Assisted with administrative aspects; data collection & editing of audio files for study examining social affordances in the environment.

Principal Investigator: Kerry Marsh, Ph.D.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

September 2015- May 2017

Instructor

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Duties: Teaching Sociology 101 to a class of approximately 50 undergraduates. Created syllabus and continue to update course with new assignments and in-class activities. Course covers a broad range of topics, such as gender, class, sexuality, and race.

September 2015- May 2015

Teaching Assistant

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Duties: Teaching the laboratory portion of Sociology 404/604: Statistical Methods in the Social Sciences. Lab consists of working through course material in SPSS as well as grading homework labs. Provided assistant to students in weekly office hours.

June 2014- May 2015

Instructor & Master Course Co-Creator

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Duties: Selected to be part of a team of professors, online course designers, and other PhD graduate assistants to create a Sociology 101 Master Course; an online course that can be used by others with a multitude of resources for instructors. After a summer of course creation, I taught the course online to approximately 50 students.

September 2013- May 2014

Teaching Assistant

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Duties: Graded homework assignments for online Sociology 101

course, provided assistance to students in weekly office hours and online January 2012- May 2012
Adjunct Instructor: Psychology of Gender
University of Hartford, West Hartford, CT
Duties: Created syllabus and prepared all course materials for a class of thirty upper-level undergraduate students. Course covered several topics in gender studies including formation of gender stereotypes, the roles of biology and society in formation of gender constructs, media and pornography, issues affecting transgendered individuals, domestic violence, and sex worker's rights.

August 2011- December 2011
Teaching Assistant
University of Hartford, West Hartford, CT
Duties: Graded scored WAIS-IV and WISC-IV protocols, provided extra assistance to students, and presented lectures for Intelligence Testing, first year M.A. Clinical Psychology course.

January 2011- May 2011
Teaching Assistant
University of Hartford, West Hartford, CT
Duties: Graded homework assignments, provided extra assistance to students, and assisted professor with construction of lectures for Personality Assessment, first year M.A. Clinical Psychology course. Course material primary focused on the MMPI-2 and Thematic Apperception Test; administration and report writing.

PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY

Sept 2021 Interviewed on KXNT Las Vegas regarding lawsuit against Nevada brothels.
Feb 2019 Interviewed for The Post Millennial: In 2009, The Federalist is more liberal than
Buzzfeed.
Feb 2019 Interviewed for Las Vegas News 3: Do Nevada brothels break federal law? Lawsuit seeks to end Nevada's legal sex trade.
Feb 2019 Interviewed for Associated Press: Nevada lawmaker set to revive brothel bandebate.
Oct 2018 Interviewed for Los Angeles Times: Dennis Hof, the brothel kingpin and realityTV star who was running for Nevada Assembly, is found dead.
July 2018 Interviewed for Los Angeles Times: Efforts to close brothels in one Nevadacounty fails to get enough signatures for ballot.
June 2018 Interviewed for The Independent: 'This is the dirtiest campaign in America': Legal brothels ban considered in Nevada as pimp runs for office.
June 2018 Interviewed for Vice: 'There is a lot of fight we still have to fight.' Voices

- from the sex workers' march.
- May 2018 Interviewed for Reason: Anti-sex work crusaders now coming for legal prostitution in Nevada.
- May 2018 Interviewed for Vox: A push to shutter legal brothels in Nevada is based on misguided ideas about sex work.
- Nov 2017 Interviewed via print and video by John Stossel for Fox News & Reason: Let's legalize prostitution. It's time for government to step away from sex work.
- July 2016 Interviewed for Las Vegas Review Journal: Prostitution in Nevada has its benefits, experts say.
- Sept 2016 Interviewed via print and video for Quartz Magazine: Christina Parreira worked in Nevada's legal brothels in order to pursue her PhD.
- Oct 2015 Guest on K-NPR Nevada Public Radio: Selling Sex: Studying Nevada's Legal and Illegal Sex Industry.
- Oct 2015 Guest on KPVM TV: Pahrump Local News to discuss experiences working in a legal brothel.
- June 2015 Interviewed for The Guardian: Survival of the freakiest: how some of Nevada's brothels are staying afloat.
- April 2015 Interviewed for Pacific Standard Magazine: When Sex Workers Join Academe.
- Feb 2015 Interviewed Las Vegas Channel 3 News WFSB.com on benefits of non-profit organization: Cupcake girls provide more than sweet treats to Las Vegas' sex industry workers.
- Dec 2014 Guest on K-NPR Nevada Public Radio: Silver State's Brothel Industry Continues to Shrink.

SERVICE

January 2014-May 2016

Peer Reviewer for Journal of Interpersonal Violence

Served as a peer reviewer for the Journal of IPV. Areas of specialization included prostitution, sex work, mental health, and deliberate self-harm.

OTHER: CLINICAL AND HEALTHCARE EXPERIENCE

January 2019- present

Health Educator & Coordinator of Sex Work Harm Reduction

Trac-B Exchange

Duties: Serving as health educator in a syringe service program. Providing education on harm reduction to communities & organizations across Nevada. Coordinating harm reduction services for individuals in the sex industry.

July 2012- December 2012

Doctoral Level Psychology Extern

Yale University, Department of Psychiatry, Adult DBT Track, Intensive Outpatient Program, New Haven, CT.

Duties: Within an intensive outpatient program, provided dialectical behavioral therapy in group setting to patients with dually-diagnosed borderline personality disorder and substance abuse disorders.

May 2011- August 2012

Fee for Service Clinician

Yale University School of Medicine, Departments of Psychiatry and Internal Medicine, Division of Substance Abuse, New Haven, CT.

Duties: Within a primary care setting, provided individual cognitive behavioral therapy to buprenorphine maintained patients.

July 2010- May 2011

Masters Level Clinical Intern

Yale University School of Medicine, Departments of Psychiatry and Internal Medicine, Division of Substance Abuse, New Haven, CT.

Duties: Within individual and group settings, provided clinical assessment & cognitive behavior therapy methadone drug counseling to an opioid dependent and chronic pain population.