

## 3

# THE JOHNS

### Introduction

Although a bibliography of studies and writings on prostitutes will fill several volumes, there are only a comparative handful of studies dealing with their patrons. Because prostitution at its simplest is an economic transaction with the prostitute selling her (or his) services to a buyer, and both elements have to exist to have prostitution, the neglect of the buyer, superficially at least, would tend to emphasize that buying of sexual services is a normative aspect of the male experience. Feminists would argue, probably rightfully, that the lack of attention is just another indication of the male-centered scholarship and studies of the past. It is not so much the feminist issue that has brought concern over sexually transmitted diseases, particularly AIDS. We probably know more about the clients of sex workers now than we ever did in the past, but a lot still remains unknown. This section is devoted to studies of johns in the United States by Elroy Sullivan and William Simon; in England by Rosie Campbell; in Canada by Chris Atchison, Laura Fraser, and John Lowman; and one of elderly male clients in Puerto Rico by Maria Del Carmen Santos Ortiz, J. L. Laó-Meléndez, and A. Torres-Sánchez. There is also a more personal account by Jim Korn on his successful encounters with sex workers and by Hugh Loebner on being a john.

The result of the studies is to challenge many of the stereotypes that have for so long appeared in accounts of prostitutes.

# THE CLIENT: A SOCIAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, AND BEHAVIORAL LOOK AT THE UNSEEN PATRON OF PROSTITUTION

ELROY SULLIVAN AND WILLIAM SIMON

Prostitution, like most other public and semi-public representations of the sexual, has often been viewed, and not without considerable justification, as a venue for expressions of male sexual drive. Consequently, most of the previous discourses on prostitution have "explained" the phenomenon with references to the nature and management of this desire. Most of these "explanations" share an assumption of an all-but-imperative drive that requires substantial efforts to be ignored or satiated. Among sociological "functionalists," such as Talcott Parsons (1960) or Kingsley Davis (1949), a major service of the prostitute was to provide a place for the effective discharge of excess drive, and to provide an outlet for that part of the drive that could not be realized within the marital relationship and in ways that need not be threatening to the marriage itself. Similar explanations, also following this essentially hydraulic model of accumulating pressures, suggest a providing of sexual outlets for those men who are not yet married, those separated from conventional living, socially inept men, and the socially unattractive.

A related line of "explanation" involves the utilization of prostitutes for specific sexual acts, such as oral sex, and suggests that attitudes of both the female and the male in an emotionally committed relationship may give rise to this alternative sexual venue. Female spouses may be unlikely or unwilling to perform these services, or the men themselves may be unable to effectively integrate the sentimental with the erotic. The very potency of these men may be challenged by suggestions of the sentimental and the maternal. This latter explanation was described by Freud (1953) as a curse of modern man: that which you love you will not be able to desire and that which you desire you will not be able to love. We can view these essentially psychodynamic explanations as being related to the prior explanations in that they share the con-

cept of the prostitute as serving society by protecting it from the potentially dangerous sex drive of the masculine gender. Indeed, these "explanations" can be found in both formal social theory and "folk" theory; a general acceptance that was clearly reflected in the ambivalence with which prostitution was treated: regulation without elimination. Prostitution was and remains criminalized in ways so as to affirm the privileged status of the marital bed without exposing it and the rest of society to the permanently threatening and disruptive character of male sexuality.

However, an examination of the data generated by Alfred Kinsey and his associates (Kinsey, Pomeroy, and Martin 1948; Gebhard and Johnson 1979) suggests that prostitutes were not a frequent form of sexual expression except for relatively small numbers of men, and for many of those only during limited periods in their lives. Most North American men had no or very little contact with prostitutes. The Kinsey data were broken down into three groups of males: white men with a college education, white men with less than a college education, and African-American men with a college education.<sup>1</sup> Only 21 percent, 26 percent, and 33 percent, respectively, of these three groups of men reported something other than rare or no experience with prostitutes. And this, it should be noted, occurred during periods in which women were under far greater pressure than is the case today to restrict their coital activity to serious courtship or marriage and when oral sex was viewed as perverse (see Gagnon and Simon 1987). Similarly, only 19 percent, 23 percent, and 30 percent, respectively, of the men reported having more than rare premarital contact with a prostitute, and even these occurrences tended to more typically represent incidental rather than extensive use. Much of this activity may have taken the form of "rituals" surrounding sexual initiation: 19 percent, 23 percent, and 6 percent of the men, respectively, reported that their initial coital act was with a prostitute. Lastly, the constraints of the marital bond were also managed without significant recourse to prostitutes as 94 percent, 88 percent, and 81 percent, respectively, reported no or relatively rare (1 to 5 events) experiences of extramarital sex with a prostitute.

Even though prostitution does not play a part in the sexual lives of most men, it is clear that fellation was a relatively rare event with 62 percent, 78 percent, and 86 percent of the men, respectively, in Kinsey's data reporting no or rare occasions of fellation in their first marriages, and that the prostitute, as it were, took up the slack in what was, if only because of its rarity, an act of hypereroticism. Fellation while with a prostitute was reported by 48 percent, 49 percent, and 37 percent of the men, respectively. Thus the prostitute as a source of perverse sexuality had considerable relevance to the men (roughly 1900 to 1945) described by the Kinsey research.

Many of these factors have lost much of their explanatory significance as much of the double standard restraining female involvement in premarital sex has diminished, leading, in turn, to a lowering of the age of first inter-

course for both genders as well as an increased acceptance of premarital sex. Similarly, oral sex has generally become normative both as a pre-coital petting technique as well as a substitute for coitus itself. Thus, it is not surprising—risking the approximations inevitable in comparing two radically different research strategies—that the proportion of American men currently having some experience with a prostitute has declined. As will be seen, only 18 percent of those men aged eighteen to fifty-nine in 1993 reported having paid a woman for sex.

From some perspectives what might be surprising is that the use of a prostitute has not declined even more. By speculation, it is possible that the prostitute remains a substantial player in the sexual expression of many men because of an elevation of erotic interest in a social landscape that advertises the explicitly erotic to an unprecedented degree. It is even possible that within this more diffusely erotic context, expanded interest in commercializable sex that is not immediately genital, such as domination and humiliation—what else is suggested by toe sucking?—may have enlarged the use and activities of “sex workers.”

Even more than the prostitute herself, the client has been considered in the most decontextualized of ways, as if both the client and the prostitute existed only in a fantasy-laden twilight zone of degraded eroticism—all the more exciting for that fact. Here, the term “decontextualized” can be applied in a double sense in that sex with a prostitute is isolated and marginalized, and that the client as well as the prostitute become distinct and detached from the lives of all others. This is true both for society at large and the social science community. A search through three major social science databases revealed only one paper examining the clients of prostitutes (Holzman and Pines 1982) in recent decades, and this research studied only thirty clients who were sampled in a somewhat haphazard way. The present chapter, drawn from the National Health and Social Life Survey (NHSLs), with people randomly sampled and questioned from all fifty states, seeks to correct this virtual void in the literature, if only by a slight degree, by being able to compare men who reported having “paid a woman for sex” with those who say they have not. Unfortunately, this most recent survey, which is likely to remain the benchmark research for the coming decade or more, provides us with no more information regarding male use of female prostitutes than the bare fact of reporting having paid a woman for sex at some point in their lives. The obvious questions such as “How often?” “At what age, both in terms of the prostitute and the client?” “What kind of woman?” and “What kind(s) of sex?” were not asked. Nonetheless, some preliminary ideas regarding the demographic, sexual, and attitudinal attributes of men who exhibit a predisposition to exchange money for sex can be suggested.

## Methods and Results

The NHSLs data were collected from 3,432 respondents between February and October 1992 via a multistage area probability sampling design. The design was applied to all adults between the ages of eighteen and fifty-nine living in the fifty states of the United States and Washington, D.C., with households as their residence. For the purposes of the present analysis, the 1,511 men who were surveyed were isolated and analyzed.

One of the "self-administered questionnaires" of the NHSLs asked the following question, allowing for yes or no responses: "Have you ever paid a woman to have sex?" Two hundred sixty-seven of the men in the survey, 17.7 percent, answered in the affirmative to this question. These men, as contrasted with 75.6 percent (1,143) men who responded in the negative, are the primary focus of this study.<sup>2</sup> This variable will subsequently be referred to as *PaidWomanForSex*.

This *PaidWomanForSex* variable will be compared with a number of other variables that one might think are related to prostitution, as well as a few variables revealing aspects of the sexual careers of the men in the NHSLs survey. The standard demographic variables will be examined along with many other variables rather directly related to the sexual. The number of sex partners and the number of marriages and cohabitation relationships will be pulled out and compared to the *PaidWomanForSex* variable, as well as a host of variables related to specific sexual behaviors, desires, and feelings.

There were two groups of men we felt might cause potential problems to the analysis: gay (or bisexual) men and men who had been in the military. Two questions in the survey were possibly capable of identifying gay men:

1. Would having sex with someone of the same sex be appealing?<sup>3</sup>
2. Have you had a male sex partner in the last five years?

If a man answered yes to either of these questions, he was considered gay. Identified in this way, 5.5 percent (83 out of 1,511) of the men in the survey were identified as gay or bisexual.<sup>4</sup>

Eleven of the eighty-three gay men (13 percent) had paid a woman for sex at some time in their lives as opposed to 256 of the 1,327 nongay men (19 percent). Via a  $\chi^2$  analysis, it was determined that this difference was not statistically significant,  $p = .173$ . Given this information, it was determined that a gay (or bisexual) man was just as likely to have visited a prostitute as a "straight" man, and no further distinction was made between these two groups of men in the analysis.

The second group of men that were of concern, men who had served in the military (referred to as *ServedInMilitary*), were identified via a relatively

straightforward question: "Not counting the reserves, are you currently serving full time in any branch of the armed services or have you served in the past?" The frequencies to the responses to this question were 27.1 percent (1,101) in the affirmative and 72.9 percent (409) in the negative. (One respondent did not answer.) In contrast to the gay men, these 409 men showed a markedly different pattern when compared to the PaidWomanForSex variable. Of those men who had served in the military, 35.9 percent (137 out of 382) had, at some time, paid a woman for sexual favors, where only 12.6 percent (130 out of 1,028) of those men who had not served in the military had paid for sex. The  $\chi^2$  was significant,  $p < .001$ .

This is not particularly new information. It has been known for years that men in the military visit prostitutes more often than men in civilian life. However, this finding in the NHSLS dataset instructs the subsequent analysis in two ways. First, it informs us that we should be on the alert for other differences between men who have visited a prostitute and those who have not as part of this military experience effect. The ServedInMilitary may be the mediator variable (or the true explanatory variable) with respect to other variables related to PaidWomanForSex. The second thing to look for is possible interactions between the military and other variables with respect to their influences on whether or not men have paid for sex. The attributes of men who have paid for sex and not been in the military may be different in significant ways from those of men who have paid for sex and have been in the military. For these reasons, many of the other variables will be analyzed with the ServedInMilitary variable in the statistical model.

At this point, several other variables from the NHSLS dataset were compared to the PaidWomanForSex variable.<sup>5</sup> The first of these was the age of the respondent. For convenience, this variable was recoded into six groups (AgeGroup). Tested with  $\chi^2$ , these variables illustrated a significant relationship,  $p < .001$ , with the relationship seen in figure 1. Logistic regression, with PaidWomanForSex as the dependent variable (DV), was used to examine the effects of the ServedInMilitary variable (AgeGroup and ServedInMilitary were independent variables [IVs]). This analysis revealed that the AgeGroup effect was persistent and that there was no interaction,  $p = .093$ .

The effect of education was next to be examined. A  $\chi^2$  analysis revealed that the two-variable effect between Education and PaidWomanForSex was not significant,  $p = .485$ . However, a logistic regression analysis, with PaidWomanForSex as the DV and both Education and ServedInMilitary as IVs, revealed that there was an interaction,  $p = .018$ . Table 1 shows the percentage of those men who have visited a prostitute broken down for each of the Education and ServedInMilitary categories. The effect between Education and PaidWomanForSex appears to be U-shaped for nonmilitary men while it seems to form more of an inverted U for the military group. Vocation or trade school training is both the lowest and the highest.

Figure 1: Percentage PaidWomanForSex (Yes) by AgeGroup

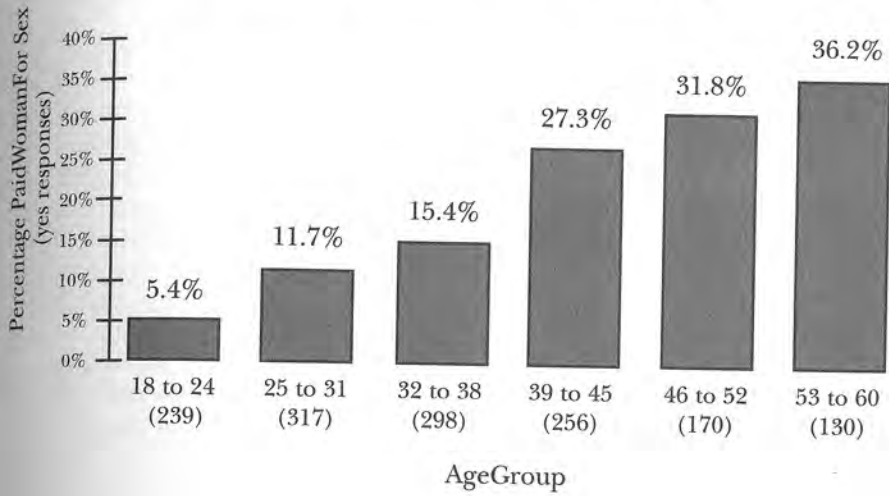
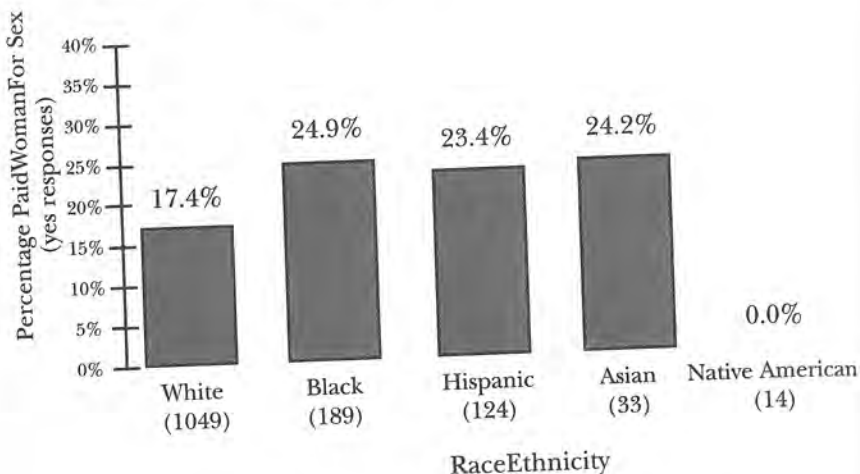


Table 1: Percentages PaidWomanForSex (Yes) by ServedInMilitary and Education

ServedInMilitary	Percent Base Count	Education					Row Total
		Less than Hi Sch	Finish Hi Sch	Vocation Trade Sc	Some College	Finish College	
No	19% (168)	11% (280)	06% (54)	10% (248)	13% (182)	16% (90)	12% (1,022)
Yes	30% (33)	33% (121)	46% (26)	44% (126)	25% (48)	23% (26)	36% (380)
Column Total	21% (201)	17% (401)	19% (80)	22% (374)	15% (230)	17% (116)	19% (1,402)

The race or ethnicity (RaceEthnicity) of the respondents is next on the agenda. The  $\chi^2$  analysis for this variable revealed a significant relationship,  $p = .023$ . As evidenced by figure 2 it appears that white males have a somewhat lower probability of having visited a prostitute than African-American, Hispanic, or Asian men. None of the fourteen Native Americans in the study had paid a woman for sex; however, this count is somewhat low to make confident generalizations.

Figure 2: Percentage PaidWomanForSex by RaceEthnicity



Continuing with the use of logistic regression, it was found that an interaction existed between ServedInMilitary and RaceEthnicity with respect to PaidWomanForSex,  $p = .040$ . Table 2 illustrates that the military appears to have a leveling-off effect with respect to different RaceEthnicities. The RaceEthnicity effect is augmented among the non-military men whereby it is all but removed for the military men.

Table 2: Percentages PaidWomanForSex (Yes) by Military and RaceEthnicity

Military	Percent Base Count	RaceEthnicity					Row Total
		White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Native	
No	10% (755)	20% (137)	21% (99)	24% (25)	00% (12)	13% (1,028)	
Yes	37% (294)	37% (52)	32% (25)	25% (8)	00% (2)	36% (381)	
Column Total	17% (1,049)	25% (189)	23% (124)	24% (33)	00% (14)	19% (1,409)	

Several other variables, as shown in table 3, were compared to PaidWomanForSex that did not reveal significant relationships. Each of these variables was also tested for an interaction effect with ServedInMilitary, and none of the interaction effects were statistically significant.



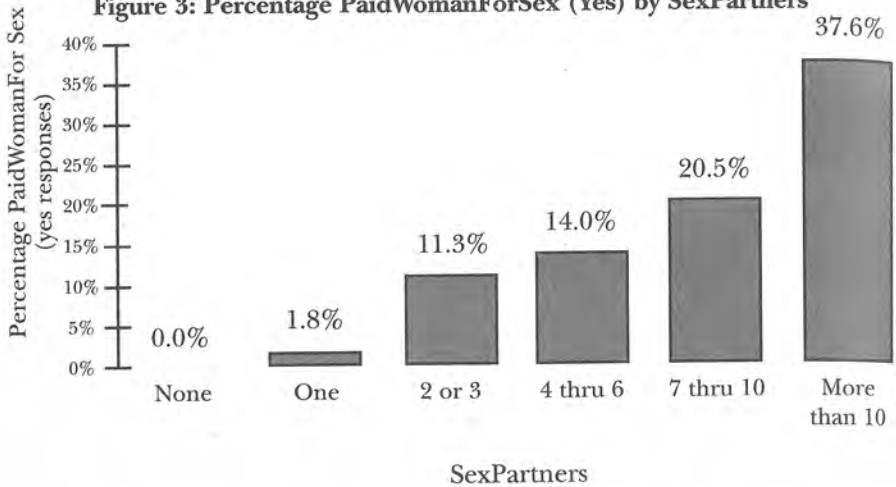
**Table 3: Variables without Statistically Significant Relationships to PaidWomanForSex (Yes)**

Variable	p = value
Household Income	.140
Political Preference	.353
Religion Raised	.148
Frequency of Religious Attendance	.140
Current Religion	.129
Raised in Rural or Urban Setting	.079
Raised in Broken Home	.520

The  $\chi^2$  test statistic was used in all cases for these variables.

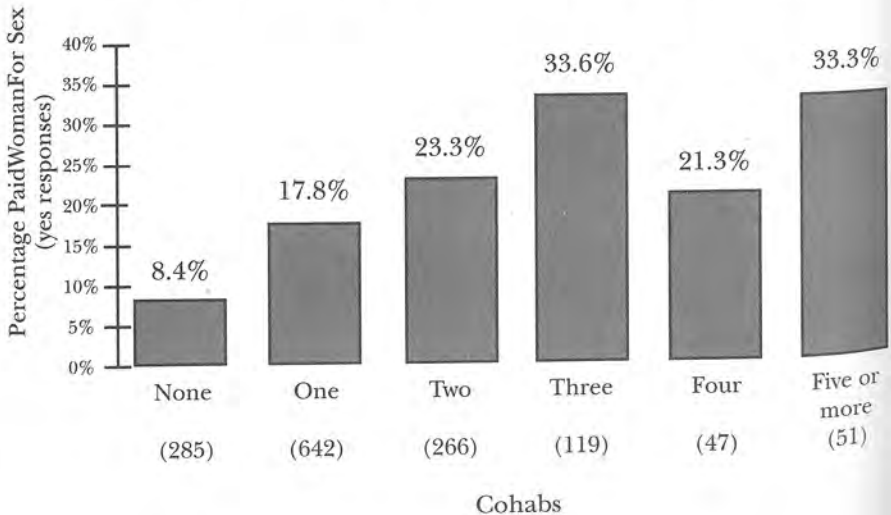
It is now time to turn to some variables that are more directly related to sexuality and sexual behavior. The first of these is the number of sex partners the respondent has had since his eighteenth birthday (*SexPartners*). As one would expect, this was related to *PaidWomanForSex*, as seen in figure 3 ( $\chi^2$  was significant,  $p < .001$ ). There is a steady rise in the likelihood of a man having visited a prostitute the more sex partners he has had, and there is a rather dramatic 17 percent jump for men who have had more than ten partners. In many of the variables to come, it is not clear that *PaidWomanForSex* should continue as the DV. Therefore, hierarchical loglinear analyses (HLAs) are used to test for the *ServedInMilitary* mediator and interaction effects. The variable *SexPartners*, along with *ServedInMilitary* and *PaidWomanForSex* were placed in an HLA. The best-fitting model continued to show the *SexPartners* by *PaidWomanForSex* relationship, and it did not reveal a three-variable interaction.

Figure 3: Percentage PaidWomanForSex (Yes) by SexPartners



The number of marriages or living-together (for at least thirty days) arrangements (Cohabs) the respondent had was examined next. As with SexPartners, and shown in figure 4, the relationship with PaidWomanForSex was statistically significant ( $\chi^2$  revealed that  $p < .001$ ). An HLA analysis revealed no ServedInMilitary mediator or three-variable effect.

Figure 4. Percentage PaidWomanForSex (Yes) by Cohabs



The present marital or cohabitation status (CohabStatus) of the respondents was examined. A  $\chi^2$  revealed that the direct relationship between this variable and PaidWomanForSex was not significant,  $p = .361$ . However, an HLA analysis revealed that there was a three-variable relationship when ServedInMilitary was included. A logistic regression analysis, with PaidWomanForSex as the DV and CohabStatus and ServedInMilitary as IVs, confirmed this finding,  $p = .029$ . The percent of the men who had paid a woman for sex for each of the CohabStatus and ServedInMilitary categories is shown in table 4.

**Table 4: Percentages PaidWomanForSex (Yes) by ServedInMilitary and CohabStatus**

ServedIn Military	Percent Base Count	CohabStatus		Row Total
		No	Yes	
No		12% (503)	14% (525)	13% (1,028)
Yes		43% (129)	32% (253)	36% (382)
Column Total		18% (632)	20% (778)	19% (1,410)

A variable referred to as EroticInterest was constructed from four of the questions in a fantasy section of the NHSLS:

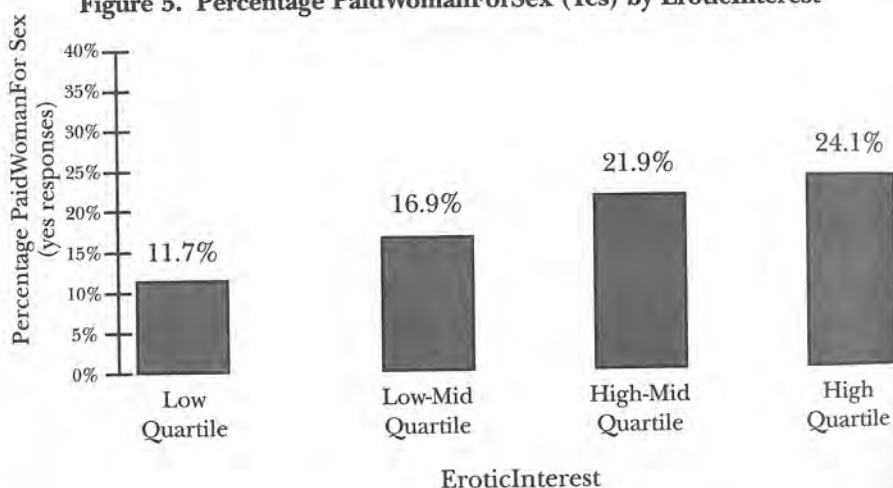
1. Would you enjoy having sex with more than one person at the same time?
2. Would you enjoy seeing other people doing sexual things?
3. Would you enjoy having sex with someone you don't personally know?
4. Would you enjoy watching partner undress/strip?

Factor analysis revealed that one significant construct ran through these four questions. The EroticInterest variable represents a quartiled version of this factor. Figure 5 illustrates that this EroticInterest variable is positively related to PaidWomanForSex ( $\chi^2$  was significant,  $p < .001$ ). Through an HLA analysis, it is determined that the relationship between PaidWomanForSex and EroticInterest was persistent and that there was no three-variable interaction.

A variable referred to as SexAttitude was constructed in a similar fashion to the EroticInterest variable. This SexAttitude question was constructed from three questions in the NHSLS questionnaire:

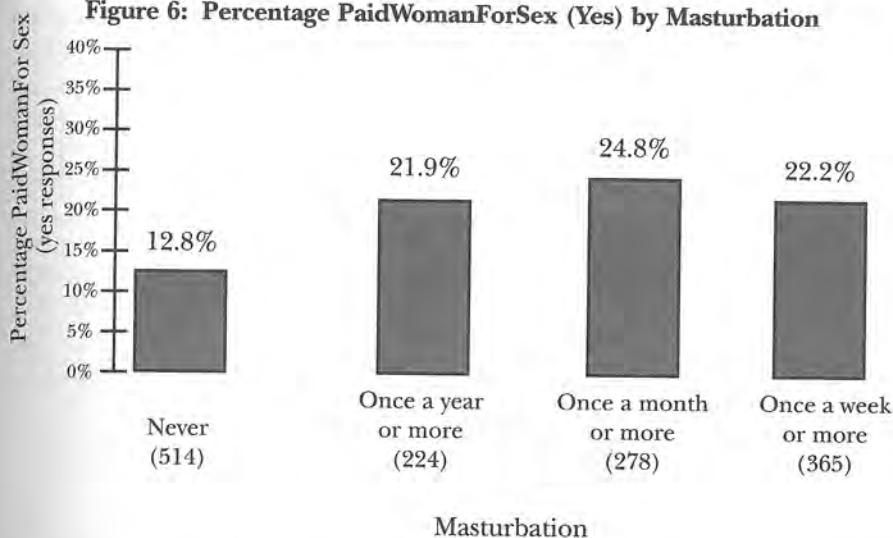
1. There's been a lot of discussion about the way morals and attitudes about sex are changing in this country. If a man and a woman have sex relations before marriage, do you think it is:
2. What if they are in their teens, say 14–16 years old? In that case, do you think sex relations before marriage are:
3. What is your opinion about a married person having sexual relations with someone other than the marriage partner—is it:

**Figure 5. Percentage PaidWomanForSex (Yes) by EroticInterest**



As with EroticInterest, factor analysis revealed one underlying construct ran through these three questions. The SexAttitude variable represents this construct. As opposed to the EroticInterest variable, a  $\chi^2$  analysis revealed that there was no relationship between this SexAttitude variable and PaidWomanForSex,  $p = .294$ . Furthermore, an HLA analysis failed to find any three-variable interaction with the inclusion of ServedInMilitary.

The frequency of masturbation during the last twelve months (Masturbation) was examined via a  $\chi^2$  analysis with the results graphed in figure 6,  $p < .001$ . The primary difference is between the "Never" masturbate category and the "Once a year or more" category. After this initial jump, there is little difference among the PaidWomanForSex percentages and the other masturbation categories. An HLA, with the inclusion of ServedInMilitary, revealed that the PaidWomanForSex and Masturbation relationship was persistent and that there was no three-variable interaction.

**Figure 6: Percentage PaidWomanForSex (Yes) by Masturbation**

In addition to the variables just analyzed, a handful of other variables were compared to PaidWomanForSex. Of the variables that had a significant relationship with PaidWomanForSex, none ceased to have the relationship when ServedInMilitary was controlled. In addition, none revealed a three-variable interaction with ServedInMilitary and PaidWomanForSex when analyzed via HLA.<sup>6</sup> A list of the variables and whether or not they revealed a significant relationship to PaidWomanForSex is provided in table 5. Some of these variables had simple yes/no responses and others had four-point or five-point Likert-style responses. In all cases, they were treated as categorical and tested with the  $\chi^2$  statistic.

## Discussion

From an analysis of this data, there are seven overall findings that are particularly worthy of distinction: general variables that did not show a relationship with PaidWomanForSex, the effects of the military, the effects of age, the race/ethnicity effect, the education effect, the possibility that men who visit prostitutes are somewhat hypersexual, and the possible revelation that these men have socio-emotional problems. Each of these effects (or group of effects) will be discussed in turn.

Table 5: Variables Related to the Sexual Compared to PaidWomanForSex (Yes)

Variable	p-value
In the last 12 months did	.029 +
You go to club with nude or semi-nude dancers	.012 +
You buy any sexually explicit books or magazines	.248
You buy any vibrators or dildos for sexual purposes	.118
You buy any other sex toys	.468
You have anal intercourse	.095
You receive a professional massage	.887
You attend a nude public gathering	.491
You have picture taken in the nude	.154
You call any sex phone services	.021 +
You buy/rent any X-rated videos	.903
Sex make you feel anxious/worried	.396
Sex make you feel cared for	.471
Sex make you feel guilty	.077
Sex make you feel loved	.532
Sex make you feel sad	.010 -
Sex make you feel satisfied	.495
Sex make you feel scared	.071
Sex make you feel thrilled	.027 -
Sex make you feel wanted	.008 -
You feel emotionally satisfied in your relationship	.003 -
You feel physically satisfied in your relationship	.134
You have sex to make up after a fight	.020 -
You have sex to express love	.381
You have sex because you wanted it	.060
You have sex to get your partner pregnant	.167
You have sex to relieve tension	.416
You achieve orgasm often during sex	.434
Your partner achieve orgasm often during sex	.001 +
Hire a prostitute or pay for sex	
Would you find the following appealing:	.461
Anal intercourse	.002 +
Partner stimulating your anus with finger	.001 +
You stimulating partner's anus with finger	.027 +
Using a dildo or vibrator	.212
Being forced to have sex	.004 +
Forcing someone to have sex	.220
Performing oral sex on your partner	.003 +
Having oral sex performed on you	.225
Does thinking about sex make you feel guilty	

The  $\chi^2$  was the test statistic used in all cases for these variables.

+ Statistically significant at .05 and positively correlated with PaidWomanForSex.

- Statistically significant at .05 and negatively correlated with PaidWomanForSex.

### *General Variables with No Significant Relationship to PaidWomanForSex*

Somewhat surprisingly, several variables in the analysis revealed no significant differences when contrasting men who have visited a prostitute with those who have not. One of the most startling is the frequency of religious attendance. It appears that men who go to religious services on a regular basis are just as likely to have paid for sex than men who rarely or never attend services. The majority of religions place prohibitions on various sexual activities, including consorting with prostitutes. However, these canons have the two-pronged effect of prohibiting as well as bringing to the fore. The very act of making something off limits simultaneously brings it into consciousness and makes it an object of desire.

The household income of the men was not differentiating with respect to having visited a prostitute. One might think that the rates would be higher at both ends of the income brackets, with the poor being more familiar with where the prostitutes are and how to access them, and the rich being able to better afford these sexual treats. However, it appears that the likelihood of finding men who have visited prostitutes is relatively evenly spread across the income brackets. This reminds us that prostitutes, as is the case with most other professionals, do not work in a homogeneous world. There is a social hierarchy to prostitution, ranging from the streetwalker in the rundown side of town to the elegant call girl who will only visit the better hotels, with the women of escort services and massage parlors filling in the middle ground.

As shown in table 3, several other variables were compared to the Paid-WomanForSex variable that revealed no relationship. Those raised in rural or urban settings actually allowed a variety of responses such as on a farm, small town, suburb of large city, and in a large city, but the likelihood of men having paid for sex was relatively equal for all of these areas. As well, the likelihood of visiting a prostitute was not differentiated by having been raised in a broken home. The broken family has, of late, been the scapegoat for a plethora of social ills. However, men who were raised in a family setting consisting of something other than their biological parents are no more likely to seek out and give patronage to prostitutes. Whether or not the men were Republican or Democrat, irrespective of the religion in which they were raised or the religion with which they currently identified, the probability of finding men who visited prostitutes remains a relative constant.

It is striking that some of these variables, not so distantly removed from realms of the sexual, show no correlation with having paid for sex. One of the most striking is that measuring the attitudes of men toward sexuality and sexual behavior. Men who think sexual relations before marriage, teen sex, and extramarital sex are wrong are just as likely to have been to see a prosti-

tute as those men who think these things are acceptable. Who are these men thinking about with respect to their attitudes? If they are thinking about themselves, they must be experiencing some degree of psychological dissonance. Is it more reasonable to suggest that they are thinking about their sons and daughters? It is possibly a reflection of the double message: "Just because I did it does not mean it is okay for you to do it." It is somewhat ironic that a generation that normalized premarital sex and brought us "free love" is now insisting that its children restrict their sexual endeavors.

### *The Effect of the Military*

As was shown in the analysis of the military men, having served in the military increases the chances that a man will have paid a woman for sex by about 23 percent. In the NHSLS dataset, the data are not available to determine the percentage of these "paid a woman for sex" experiences that happened exclusively while the men were enlisted. However, novelists, accounts of acts during military excursions, and common sense have long told us that the frequency of prostitution visitation is higher for military men than it is for civilians. The excursions after completing boot camp or on leave after a long tour are well known.

The argument can be made that the military is a total institution. It has a socializing effect that is capable of overriding such things as upbringing, race/ethnicity, and many other sociological and demographic factors. As an indicator of the strength of the military effect, the RaceEthnicity and Education variables can be examined (shown in table 1 and table 2). The probability of having visited a prostitute initially rises and then falls with respect to education when examining men who have been in the military, and it does virtually the opposite for men who have not. The RaceEthnicity variable illustrates the effect of the military even somewhat more dramatically. There is little difference across RaceEthnicities for men who were in the military while there are sizable differences for men who were not. The influence of the military introduces white, African-American, and Hispanic men to the prostitute experience in relatively equal proportions.

Interestingly, there was no case where the military experience revealed itself as a mediator to some other variable that was related to having paid for sex. This suggests that the military experience is quite strong but relatively well confined with respect to the clients of prostitutes. This is not to say that the military experience does not affect individuals. It is simply that the military experience is not the underlying cause of the correlation that other variables have to the PaidWomanForSex variable. These other variables represent independent relationships to and reasons for paying for sex.

The only other variable in the analyses that illustrated a three-variable interaction with PaidWomanForSex and ServedInMilitary was CohabStatus



(whether or not the men were currently in a sexually cohabiting relationship). This variable that measured whether or not the men were currently in a cohabiting sexual relationship appeared to dampen the effect of the military on visiting prostitutes, whereas it had little effect on the nonmilitary men, as shown in table 4. The effect is not dramatic (an 11 percent decrease); however one might assume that some of the married (or cohabiting) men were married at the time they were in the military, and that they were more faithful to their wives (or girlfriends). It is worthy to note that even for those men who are currently in a cohabiting relationship, the military men still maintained substantially higher rates of visiting prostitutes, 32 percent compared to only 14 percent.

### *The Age Effect*

Figure 1 revealed that there was a sizable relationship between the age of a man and whether or not he had visited a prostitute. The rate was only slightly more than 1 in 20 for men age eighteen to twenty-four while it is more than 1 in 3 for men age fifty-three to sixty. Since the NHSLS survey was not a longitudinal study, the data are not available to determine whether this is a biological (or social) age phenomenon, or an effect having to do more with cohorts or generations. We know that the number of men with military experience has decreased in recent decades, but the military variable revealed no interaction effect with age. The likelihood of having visited a prostitute rises with age at about the same rate for those men who were in the military as it does for those men who were not. This age phenomenon is independent of the military effect.

A possible explanation, having more to do with cohorts rather than purely age, is that the women's movement washed over the American social landscape in recent decades. Many females who came into womanhood during and after the 1960s are more open to, if not more demanding of, the sexual than women of earlier years. In the early part of the century, it has been suggested that the prostitute served to provide an outlet for the excess sexual desire of men, but with the coming of the women's movement this desire is more readily and easily fulfilled through coital activity with spouses and other sexual partners. In using this as an explanation of the age effect, it must be noted that the essential, or hydraulic, model of male sexuality is still threatened. If the expression of sexuality among women is so easily changed through a social movement, why is it that the same could not happen to men, possibly in the reverse direction?

As opposed to a cohort effect, the biological—or, more to the point, the social—age of these men may serve as the better explanation. In the simplest of senses, the older a man is, the more lifetime opportunity he has had to consider visiting a prostitute. In a somewhat more complex vein, it is known

that sexual interest in one's partner wanes with the length of the relationship. However, it is not at all clear that a corresponding waning of interest in the sexual per se accompanies this. With far less threat to the marital bonds than an affair with a co-worker or other female acquaintance, an occasional visit to the prostitute may be reaffirming to the sexual virility of many men. Unlike previous generations, the psychological need for a man to see himself as sexual, both in terms of duration and intensity, may exist as a social expectation—if not a mandate—for the contemporary male.

### *The Race/Ethnicity Effect*

The fact that the military overrides any racial or ethnic differences has already been discussed. However, both figure 2 and the nonmilitary men of table 2 illustrate that there is a race/ethnicity effect. If we focus on the nonmilitary row of table 2, it can be seen that twice the proportion of African-American and Hispanic men have paid a woman for sex as have white men. The fact that these numbers can be changed so dramatically by a social phenomenon such as military service suggests that other social factors may be at play in producing the racial/ethnic differences among nonmilitary men. Even with equal rights and affirmative action laws, it is known that minority men are still a long way from achieving social, educational, and economic parity with American white men. This imbalance creates a situation in which the minority male has restricted opportunity to affirm himself as a man, both in terms of absolute expression and variety of expression. Expression of maleness in the realm of the sexual becomes the more singular avenue of self-masculine affirmation. In addition, the possibility of failure takes on a level of hypersignificance. The prostitute provides male affirmation in that interest in and performance of the sexual is demonstrated, and that the possibility of rejection by the female sexual partner is greatly reduced. One usually need not worry about being told "no" when with a prostitute.

### *The Education Effect*

The relationship between having paid a woman for sex and education was quite interesting. Analyzed directly, there was no correlation between the two variables. However, with the inclusion of military service, two opposite curvilinear relationships emerged. Focusing only on those men who have not been in the military, more education initially tends to cause decreases in the likelihood of prostitution visitation, bottoming out at trade school degrees, and then result in increases in prostitution patronage continuing through advanced degrees. The frequency of paying for sex is up at both ends of the continuum. Regarding the low end of education, it might be argued that these

men live in environments where the prostitute is seen and available. These uneducated men know where to go to find her and engage her services. In addition, similar to the race/ethnicity effect, these men may have limited access to other expressions of maleness and the expression personal power.

The college-educated (and beyond) men may be exhibiting an increased interest in the forbidden areas of the sexual as an expression of personal freedom and prowess. It becomes more of an expression of "the challenge" or "the adventurous" as opposed to a need for maintaining a sense of self. Other research has demonstrated a rather strong relationship between erotic interest and education (Sullivan, in press). It may very well be the case that these educated men have allowed themselves to explore areas that appear less interesting or more threatening to men of more moderate educational attainment.

As opposed to these findings, the military tends to wash out and even reverse the entire education effect, as seen in table 1. The greatest discrepancy, the men with vocational or trade school training, may be the result of the educational opportunities afforded in the military. Trade school training is particularly available while serving in the military, and men who take advantage of this opportunity may be precisely the ones more dedicated to the overall military experience. If one allows for the high prostitution patronage scores among the "trade school" and "some college" military men, the differences in the scores are not terribly noticeable, once again illustrating the blanketing effect of the military. It should be noted that in no case do the non-military rates even approach the military ones for any of the education categories. Education, as with race/ethnicity, has the capacity to influence the likelihood that a man will visit a prostitute, but only if its influences are allowed to operate in an environment not dominated by much stronger social factors.

### *The Question of Hypersexuality*

The analyses make several suggestions of a hypersexuality among the men who have called upon a prostitute. These analyses report more lifetime sex partners and sexual cohabitation arrangements (marriages or "living together" arrangements) for prostitute visitors than for their male counterparts, as shown in figures 3 and 4. With respect to cohabitation arrangements, there is a 12 percent jump in the likelihood of prostitution visitation between men with four cohabitation experiences and those with five or more. A desire for the sexual is on the agenda and takes on a heightened significance for many of those men who visit prostitutes.

However, this notion of a hypersexuality cannot be taken as a singular reason for visits to prostitutes. Of those men with only two or three sex partners, 11 percent had taken in the prostitution experience. Masturbation frequency, another indicator of an inordinate interest in the sexual, is also

related to prostitution visitation, as shown in figure 6, but almost 13 percent of those men who had never masturbated in the last year had paid a woman for sex. The constructed measure of erotic interest also showed a rather strong relationship with paying for sex, with over 24 percent of those men with high erotic interest scores having been to a prostitute, but almost 12 percent of those men with low erotic interest scores had indulged in the prostitute experience (see figure 5).

Continuing with this notion of hypersense of the sexual, table 5 reveals a cluster of other behaviors and desires that are positively related to paying for sex. These men are more likely to enjoy the services of nude or semi-nude clubs, to purchase sexually oriented publications and videos, and to have desires for sexual activities that may be considered deviant or adventurous, such as anal stimulation or the use of vibrator equipment. However, these behaviors and desires do not appear to run into areas that would be considered deviant in the extreme. Nude or semi-nude clubs as well as "sex shops" are found in virtually all major cities and are operated, for the most part, within the limits of the law. These men do not prefer nude gatherings, actual anal intercourse, or nude picture-taking sessions to a degree that is any different from men who do not visit prostitutes. Many prostitute patrons are clearly more interested in sexual variety and exploration in ways that other men are not. They are willing to explore their sexuality in terms of both thoughts and behaviors.

### *The Possibility of Socio-Emotional Problems*

In addition to interpreting a tendency toward the hypersexual, the reverse correlations in table 5, as well as the one positive correlation having to do with forcing someone to have sex, could be taken as a sign that those men who have seen a prostitute are more at risk for emotional problems. They are more likely to report feelings of emotional and physical dissatisfaction, they do not feel as wanted or satisfied with respect to the sex act, and they do not have sex as an expression of love. The data are not available to determine whether this is a reflection of the reality of these men or more a reflection of their perceived social worlds. But it is interesting to note that these men do not report lower frequencies of achieving orgasms for either themselves or their sexual partners.

With respect to the prostitute, it is difficult not to argue that she, at least to some degree, is fulfilling the social and psychological voids that are not being fulfilled in the other areas of the social lives of many of these men. The prostitute provides a social and psychological emollient while requiring little emotional competence or obligation in return.

## Concluding Remarks

Many variables have been compared with and contrasted to the act of having visited a prostitute at least one time in the sexual lives of the men in the NHLS dataset. These comparisons and contrasts have been made, in many cases, without a great deal of integration to other related variables. However, this is not a grave concern if one recognizes that there are an abundance of "reasons" for paying for sex while there is a rather restricted number of "ways" that one might go about it. The purpose was not to identify the singular "explanation" of why men give patronage to prostitutes, but, instead, to open a discussion of the varied and complex "reasons" for the behavior.

It is clear that social factors surrounding the military provide rather strong encouragement for men to visit prostitutes. It may be that, in many instances, the likelihood of men paying for sex has more to do with situational factors than any psychological need or biological drive. One might speculate about other situations that may promote the use of prostitutes: the truck stop milieu, the image and expectations of the traveling salesman, the presumed favors expected of prospective purchasers at trade shows.

This activity is clearly not practiced by the majority of men in the contemporary United States culture, but it does occur with sufficient frequency to be a normal sexual experience for a large group of men who came of age in the latter part of the twentieth century. The overall probability of having visited a prostitute is 18 percent, with some segments of the population approaching 50 percent. This is not an activity with which we may all agree, but it is, as the saying goes, the oldest of professions, and there appears to be enough interested men to assure its continued survival. The fact that in no case, for the groups of men that were examined, does the incidence of visiting prostitutes exceed 50 percent does not suggest that prostitution is a minor part of the sexual milieu and lives of a great number men. For many, she may serve as more of a fantasy image than a real, accessible, or allowable participant in sexual life. One might ask, how many men are psychological, if not actual, clients of prostitutes in the terms of a privately fantasized tease or the creation of a desire?

## Notes

1. The frequencies and percentages for African-American men with less than a college education were removed from analysis in the Kinsey data because of problems related to sampling.
2. There were 101 men (6.7 percent) who did not respond to the question. They are dropped from all analyses involving the PaidWomenForSex variable.

3. This question allowed responses of very appealing, appealing, not appealing, and not at all appealing. Responses of very appealing or appealing were taken as an indicator of a gay man.

4. The first question used to identify gay men had 6 missing cases and the second question had 174 missing cases. These missing cases were assumed to be negative responses to the question. This assumption creates the possibility that some gay men were mistakenly treated as nongay men.

5. As the variables were coded in the original dataset, many were given categories of Refused, Don't Know, Unknown, and the like. In a great majority of the cases, there was no corresponding response on the original questionnaires. In an attempt to bring some order to these essentially missing values, all were recoded as missing data. For the variables of interest, in no case was the missing data percentage large enough to represent any substantial problems to the analysis.

6. Actually, the question regarding the appeal of receiving fellatio did reveal a three-variable relationship with the HLA, but the relationship did not hold up through a linear regression analysis with the receiving fellation variable as the DV,  $p = .053$ . Therefore, it was concluded that whatever three-variable effect was there was very weak at best.

## References

- Davis, K. 1949. *Human Society*. New York: The Macmillan Company.
- Freud, S. 1953. Three essays on sexuality. In *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works*. Vol. 7. London: Hogarth Press.
- Gagnon, J. H., and W. Simon. 1987. The sexual scripting of oral genital contacts. *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 16: 1-25.
- Gebhard, P. H., and A. B. Johnson. 1979. *The Kinsey data: Marginal tabulations of the 1938-1963 interviews conducted by the Institute of Sex Research*. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company.
- Holzman, H. R., and S. Pines. 1982. Buying sex: The phenomenology of being a john." *Deviant Behavior: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 4: 89-116.
- Kinsey, A., W. B. Pomeroy, and C. E. Martin. 1948. *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company.
- Parsons, T. 1960. *Structure and Process in Modern Society*. New York: Free Press.
- Sullivan, E. In press. *Demographic, behavioral and psychological correlates of erotic interest*.

# INVISIBLE MEN: MAKING VISIBLE MALE CLIENTS OF FEMALE PROSTITUTES IN MERSEYSIDE

ROSIE CAMPBELL

## Introduction

Despite a limited number of recent pieces of research, there has been little research that has focused on men who pay for sex in the United Kingdom. The focus has tended to be on the women who sell sex. The men who create a demand for and pay for commercial sex have remained relatively invisible. This chapter summarizes some findings from a series of twenty-eight interviews with male clients of female prostitutes in Merseyside, which is located within the northwest region of the United Kingdom. I will briefly outline our methodology and summarize the sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents and the nature of their reported commercial sex involvement. I will outline the reasons they gave for paying for sex and some of the meanings they attached to their commercial sex involvement, making some links between these and dominant cultural constructions of heterosexual masculine sexuality. This chapter urges further research with men who pay for sex to enable a more comprehensive analysis of the socio-economic and cultural relations that sustain prostitution.

## Background

The research on which this chapter is based was part of a broader project that examined female street prostitution in inner-city Liverpool during 1995–1996 (Campbell, Coleman, and Torkington 1996).<sup>1</sup> The objective of the project was

to examine the views and experiences of those affected by and involved in street prostitution. Utilizing a range of methodologies, researchers gave several groups the opportunity to identify the issues and problems related to street prostitution that were most salient to them. These groups included female street prostitutes, residents, men who pay for commercial sex, and representatives from police, health, and other statutory and voluntary agencies.

## Secrets and Lies: Researching Male Clients

As McKeganey has remarked, "There are enormous methodological difficulties associated with interviewing male clients" (1994, 290). Many of these are linked to the secretive and illicit nature of this group's involvement in commercial sex. This secrecy means that it is difficult to assess the proportion of the male population who pay for sex. Hence, one problem for researchers is establishing a meaningful sampling frame for men in this population; as a result they are unable to identify, with confidence, a "representative" sample. In a recent large-scale survey of sexual behavior and attitudes in Britain, Johnson et al. (1994) found that 6.8 percent of men in their sample reported that they had paid for sex at some point in their lives. A smaller proportion, 1.8 percent, reported that they had paid for sex during the last five years. It seems highly likely that respondents would underreport such illicit behavior. Although a minority, this underestimation is a significant minority.

The taboo related to buying and selling sex still persists, certainly in the United Kingdom. It has been identified as one key reason why so few men who pay for sex identify themselves publicly (McCleod 1982; Faugier and Cranfield 1995). Recent research confirms this secrecy among British men, suggesting that most men conceal their involvement in commercial sex from family and friends (McKeganey and Barnard 1996; McKeganey 1994; Faugier and Cranfield 1995).

No men in our research were completely "out" about their commercial sex involvement. A small number of men (five) had informed others, usually one close friend or family member. One man had confided in his mother, one his sister, one several close friends, another in his brother-in-law (who as a result went on a visit to see a prostitute), and one man had informed his partner. It's important to note that this group of men still stressed the importance of concealing their behavior from others.

The majority of men in this research chose not to tell any friends or family about their behavior. The three key reasons given were (1) fear of partner's reaction, (2) fear of being labeled as strange or sexually perverse, and (3) sense of shame. One man said, "I'd be scared of someone saying why does he go? They'd think I was weird and my girlfriend would not be too



pleased at all." Another said, "I can't bear to think about the wife and daughters finding out—it would destroy them. I don't want to upset them like that, so I keep it very discreet."

This continued invisibility and analogous secrecy also demonstrate the inequitable, gendered, social, and economic power relations that facilitate the relative imbalance by which prostitutes become scrutinized by researchers, health educators, and the criminal justice system, while clients quietly carry on with their lives.

It has been easier to pay attention to the women who sell sex and label them as a category of "unrespectable," deviant women than pay attention to clients and examine the reasons why men pay for and create a market in commercial sex.

McCleod (1982) stressed that the invisibility of male clients and the focus on the women who sell sex have meant there is a limited understanding of prostitution because there has been limited exploration of men's motivations and "men's experiences of daily life" that partly sustain prostitution.

## Methods Used

Although one of the key problems researchers face, therefore, is making contact with and accessing this "hidden" population who engage in illicit, often secretive behavior that they are likely to want to conceal, this group has not proved impossible to contact. In recent years researchers have utilized several methods of contact and have begun to gather information about the sociodemographic characteristics and motivations of men who pay for sex (McCleod 1982; Faugier, Hayes, and Butterworth 1992; Day, Ward, and Perrotta 1993; McKeganey 1994, McKeganey and Barnard 1996).

Contact methods that have been used by researchers include, among others

- Approaching clients directly as they solicit women on the streets or in other settings where they contact prostitutes (Leonard 1990; Kinnell 1989)
- Contacting clients via police stations (Faugier, Hayes, and Butterworth 1992)
- Utilizing women working as prostitutes as researchers/observers to gather information about their clients (Kinnell 1989)
- The use of media to advertise a research interview phone line, to facilitate telephone interviews

In the United Kingdom several researchers have used the first method as part of their methodology for contacting men who pay for commercial sex.

Although not without difficulties and limitations, it has generally been found to be a relatively efficient and effective means of reaching this "hidden" population, particularly in terms of response rate and time.

Faugier and Cranfield noted that "The use of media (i.e., advertisements and telephone survey) appeared to be an effective method for talking to this hidden population" (1995, 30). We had only limited time for this component of the research and hence partly for pragmatic reasons decided to replicate this approach.

We placed an advertisement in the personal columns of the local daily newspaper (*Liverpool Echo*) for three evenings over a two-week period. The same advertisement was placed in a free weekly newspaper in the Merseyside area over the same period. Leaflets with the same advert were also placed in the Genito-Urinary Medicine (GUM) Clinic at the Royal Liverpool Hospital. The advertisement invited men who pay for sexual services with female prostitutes to take part in the research project and stressed the academic nature of the research. A temporary telephone line was set up for a two-week period. A semi-structured schedule was designed for interviewing male clients, which incorporated both closed and open questions, with scope for unstructured in-depth exploration of issues. Interviews on average lasted forty-five minutes. Similarly to McKeganey (1994) and Faugier and Cranfield (1995), we received few nuisance or silent phone calls. One of the problems we did encounter was that several interviews were terminated because the respondent was interrupted and could not continue the interview in privacy.

Given the secretive nature of commercial sex involvement, you may ask: Why would any client take part in any research?

Respondents stressed two key reasons for participation. First, the telephone gave them a rare opportunity to discuss this aspect of their lives, an experience that was described as cathartic by several respondents, and, second, they liked the opportunity to contribute to research that may have a role in changing policy/law, etc. It seems telephone interviews provide researchers with a means of contacting male clients in which the clients feel their anonymity is not seriously jeopardized.

## Limitations

There are, of course, many limitations with the methodology used in this research. The respondents were clearly a self-selected sample, constituting only those who saw the advertisement and who then chose to make contact. There may be differences in attitude and behavior between those who wanted to cooperate with the research and those who did not. Also, our number of responses and hence sample size was limited. Responses could have been

increased if further advertisements had been placed and the time period for research extended. Our research cannot claim to have examined a statistically reliable representative sample of male clients of prostitutes nor can its results be generalized to the larger "hidden" populations of male clients either in Merseyside or beyond. Yet this was not our aim. Our aims were to (1) carry out some exploratory research with clients in Merseyside, a group not previously accessed; (2) to enable male clients of female prostitutes to describe their commercial sex involvement from their own perspectives, to allow us to obtain an insight into what meanings they attach to their behavior and to elicit their views and attitudes toward prostitution and prostitutes; and (3) to provide some information about the behavior, motivations, and views of a small group of clients of prostitutes and attempt to locate these within the broader existing research on male clients.

## Sociodemographic Profile: "Ordinary" Men

Our respondents were drawn from a wide range of social backgrounds. This range concurs with existing research.

**Age.** Their ages ranged from eighteen to seventy-one with the majority (89 percent) between eighteen and forty-nine. Sixty-eight percent had first used the services of a prostitute between the ages of eighteen and twenty-nine.

**Ethnic origin.** In terms of ethnic origin all but one of the respondents described themselves as white British. Other researchers (McKeganey and Barnard 1996; Faugier and Cranfield 1995) report a broader ethnic spread.

**Employment Status.** Seventy-nine percent of our respondents were employed; of those who were not employed, five were unemployed, one was retired, and two were registered disabled. The respondents came from a wide range of occupational categories: professional, managerial, self-employed, white collar, skilled, and unskilled manual. Their occupations included laborer, businessman, electrician, city council worker, radiographer, and factory inspector.

**Residence.** The majority of respondents were from Liverpool (64 percent) or the surrounding Merseyside area; only one man resided outside the northwest. The majority regularly contacted women in the Liverpool or the wider Merseyside area. The majority of respondents were also involved in a steady long-term relationship (see table 1.)

Table 1: Status of Respondents

Status	Percentage of Respondents
Married or cohabiting	54
Steady non-cohabiting relationship	14
Single	32

When male clients become visible, it is difficult to sustain the commonly held assumptions about this group that help to maintain invisibility and secrecy. In terms of their sociodemographic characteristics and broader lifestyles the existing research suggests that men who pay for sex are not necessarily socially inadequate or deviant men but "ordinary" men (McCleod 1982). Prostitutes reflecting on their clientele often refer to their ordinariness. This conflicts with dominant discourses that often constructed male clients as deviant, antisocial, oversexed individuals. As such, they can be easily compartmentalized from the broader population of "ordinary" men. The more "ordinary" the more challenging and disturbing. McKeganey noted that "the secret world of the client is sustained by the belief that the men who buy sex are never our father, brother, husband or boyfriend, but someone else, who we do not know and may not even wish to know." The indications of existing research are that men who pay for sex certainly could be our fathers or brothers. Hence for many people the "ordinariness" of men who pay for sex is an uncomfortable reality. A female resident of a street soliciting area of Liverpool commented in 1996: "One night I saw a man in a Ford Sierra drop a woman off, as he drove past I saw a baby seat in the back and I thought God he could be anybody." This "ordinariness" provides a useful way of understanding the behavior of men who pay for sex. Rather than approach male clients as a deviant social group, we should approach them as men whose behavior is shaped by dominant notions of masculinity and specifically masculine sexual expression and identity.

## Nature of Commercial Sex Involvement

The frequency for which the respondents reported paying for commercial sex varied (see table 2), as did the number of prostitutes whom they reported they had contacted during the previous twelve months (see table 3).

Table 2. Frequency of Commercial Sex Encounters

Frequency of Commercial Sex Encounter	Percentage of Respondents (n = 28)
More than once per week	14
Once per week or fortnightly	21
Monthly	22
Less than monthly	43

Table 3. Number of Prostitutes Contacted during Previous 12 Months

Number of Prostitutes Contacted	Percentage of Respondents (n=28)
1	18
2-19	36
20-39	15
40-59	8

## Sexual Services Purchased

The three most commonly purchased sexual services reported were vaginal intercourse, oral sex/fellatio, and masturbation. Only three respondents reported that they had paid for anal sex in their encounters with prostitutes during the previous twelve months. These findings concerning the types of services most frequently purchased reflect those from research in other cities (Keganey and Barnard 1996). A small number of men reported that they purchased other specialist services. Several researchers have noted the reported popularity of fellatio. Leonard (1990) argues this could be accounted for because fellatio is less risky, because it is quickly and easily done, and because it is one sexual act male clients report their partners won't do.

## Forms of Contact

The men in our sample contacted prostitutes in a range of ways. For most men, the primary place of contact with prostitutes was in saunas or massage parlors (see table 4).

Table 4: Form of Contact

Form of Contact	Number of Respondents (n = 28)
Saunas only	12
Streets and saunas	5
Street only	5
Escort agencies	2
Contact magazines/Personal columns	4

When asked why they chose to contact women in particular settings, the respondents revealed that they perceived qualitative differences in the commercial sex encounter. Their preference for a particular setting seemed to depend on the type of experience wanted. The men who contacted women in saunas/massage parlors identified four key reasons why they chose this form of contact: safety, physical comfort, cleanliness/hygiene, and reduced possibility of being caught. Men commented: "It's within my locality and I feel safe there. It's very discreet and I've never felt a danger of being there." "It's warm, comfortable, clean, and more of a service." This emphasis on indoor establishments providing broader service was also mentioned by the respondents who went to an escort agency. They explained that, although it was more expensive, the woman spent more time with them and was more attentive.

Reasons given by men for contacting women on the street included lower cost, convenience, greater number of women from which to choose, and the thrill. Their comments included "I went to a sauna once, but I can get what I want cheaper on the streets" and "I enjoy the whole process of driving around seeing the girls and making a decision. The sex is often a letdown compared to the build up and the buzz."

Faugier, Hayes, and Butterworth (1992) also noted that some respondents in their study "expressed the need to experience risk to themselves as an important element of using prostitutes."

## Motivations

As other researchers have found when exploring with male clients why they paid for sex, we found the majority had more than one motivation. From their interviews with 143 clients McKeganey and Barnard (1996) identified five broad areas incorporating the reasons clients described for engaging in commercial sex: the capacity to purchase specific sexual acts, the wide number of different women that could be contacted, the ability to contact women with specific physical characteristics, the fact that contact with a prostitute was limited, and the element of thrill that was involved.

The key motivations revealed by men in this research encompass most of those identified by other researchers.

### *Thrill/Excitement/Enjoyment*

Among our respondents thrill or excitement was the most frequently mentioned motivation. Many men stated that they paid for sex because they enjoyed it, they found it sexually pleasurable and exciting. Some respondents said going with a prostitute was exciting because it fulfilled their sexual fantasy: "It's always something I'd thought about doing. I used to fantasize about going with prostitutes and masturbate thinking about that. So it's really exciting because it's something that has always turned me on." Some men described commercial sex as particularly exciting specifically because it was "taboo" and illicit: "It's so exciting partly because I shouldn't be doing it." Faugier and Cranfield (1995) suggest that the illicit nature of commercial sex is an integral part of its attraction for some clients who contacted women on the streets.

### *Sexual Services Not Provided by Partner*

The second most frequently mentioned reason for using prostitutes was to purchase sexual services that the men reported their partners would not perform: "I started going [to a prostitute] because I wasn't getting on with the wife. I enjoy the variety of women and sex. I can do things my wife won't do." "My wife's not interested in sex anymore, so that's why I go to prostitutes." Some men noted that their noncommercial female partners had explicitly indicated that they did not enjoy or did not want to engage in certain sexual acts. Indeed, some men explained that they had not openly discussed the matter with partners but assumed they would not enjoy or would refuse to be involved in certain sexual practices. For example, one man commented, "I just know she wouldn't be interested [in oral sex]. I know from things that have been on the telly and how she's reacted." Like this man, many men referred to oral sex as one sex act they could not experience with their partner. Many of these men expressed the view that their involvement in commercial sex supported rather than damaged their relationships with their wives or non-paid partners: "It keeps my marriage together. My wife won't try anything different so I go to prostitutes." Several researchers have noted that some men explain/rationalize their commercial sex involvement as either a solution to or a compensatory necessity in an unfulfilling sexual relationship with a spouse or steady partner (McCleod 1982). What many respondents shared was an ability to *compartmentalize* their relationships with their steady partners and their encounters with prostitutes. Many men stressed that their relationships with prostitutes involved purely sexual pleasure whereas rela-

tionships with other steady partners, although involving sexual relations, incorporated love, intimacy, and commitment. In these terms, their relationship with their wife/partner/girlfriend was not jeopardized and their behavior was not necessarily interpreted as a betrayal of their partner. As they saw it, the paid sexual encounter had no meaning once it was over. Linked to this, McCleod (1982) noted that clients often expressed the view that going to a prostitute was less of a betrayal than having an affair would be. This was the opinion of several men with partners in this research: "It could be worse, I could have affairs. I mean then I'd be really involved with the woman. With prostitutes it's just business, it's just the sex." Going to a prostitute was also seen as less of a risk. Sex with a nonprostitute woman on a casual basis allowed for the greater possibility of emotional involvement (particularly by the woman) and hence complications. So some men with partners saw prostitution as a way of having other sexual partners with less risk of exposure and potential hassle than a noncommercial affair. This is illustrated by the following comment: "It's casual sex with no complications, it's a business deal and that's that. I had an affair with a woman around from where I live. It got nasty when she told my girlfriend. This way there are no complications. I wouldn't have an affair again. It's too messy." McKeganey (1996) noted that: "Almost all the men shared the belief that the prostitutes existed in an entirely separate sphere of their lives from their relationships with their partners." Our transcripts revealed a similar separation.

### *Loneliness/Inability to Form Sexual Relationships*

Thirty-five percent of respondents mentioned loneliness or inability to form sexual relationships as a motivation for going to prostitutes. For example, one man reported that: "From twenty to twenty-five I was anorexic and very reclusive. There was no chance of forming a relationship. When I was twenty-eight I fell in love with a friend, but it didn't work out. I went to Amsterdam. It was strange at first going with a prostitute but now it seems normal. I know it's not a proper relationship with a prostitute but I wouldn't like one at the moment." One man linked his commercial sex encounters with what he perceived as his inability to attract women through other routes because of his disability: "I'm ugly, no women will go out with me. . . . It's because of my disability. So prostitutes are a sexual outlet for me." This man described himself as lonely, depressed, and sexually frustrated.

### *Different Women*

Some men reported that one of their motivations was being able to choose from a number of different women and having a variety of sexual partners: "I like



casual sex and I don't know why but I've always fantasized about going with different women. With a prostitute I can do that and pick a different woman all the time. I like to drive around and find the woman who's the right one. The first one I see is rarely the one." During interviews, several men also mentioned that one attraction of paying for sex was the ability to be able to have sexual contact with women who had particular physical characteristics: "There's some lovely women. I like to choose women who've got big breasts and an attractive figure."

### *Sexual Urge*

Some men explicitly mentioned that they paid for sex to fulfill a sexual urge. They described their sexual desire as an overwhelming urge that had to be satisfied: "It's sexual frustration. That's why I go to prostitutes." The majority of men interviewed shared a belief that their behavior was a reasonable, normal expression of male sexuality. The following comment is indicative of this view: "I think it's normal. Most men like to go with different women and most would go to prostitutes if they could afford it and had the nerve."

### *Convenience: Business*

Many men expressed the view that sex with women who worked as prostitutes was convenient—both practically and emotionally. Commercial sex was described as practical convenience in the sense that it fitted in with their schedules. One man, for example, explained that he could leave work, pick up a woman on the street, have sex, then return home to his wife, adding just over thirty minutes to his journey home from work.

Several men expressed the view that with a prostitute there was no need to go through the rituals that would be required to pick up a woman in a pub or club or initiate an affair with a work colleague. Several men mentioned their dislike of the dating rituals while explaining their commercial sex encounters. One man said, "I've never liked going out drinking with groups of lads, clubbing it and all the trying to get off with them. This [commercial sex] is easier." Another man commented, "I'd split from my fiancée and I didn't go out drinking or anything like that, and I didn't want to. I hate all that. Well I wanted sex so I went to this massage parlor I'd seen advertised in the *Sunday Sport*. So it's convenient and there's no questions asked, you just go in and pick someone up."

Several men commented that one of the reasons they paid for commercial sex was that it did not require any emotional commitment or involvement. In their research, Kinnell and Griffiths (1989) found the most common reason given by both single men and men with partners was that they wanted sex without emotional involvement. McKeganey and Barnard

(1996) also noted that men in their interviews "were attracted by the uninvolved nature" of commercial sex. One man commented: "I first went three years ago when I was thirty-eight. I wanted a change from my wife with no emotional ties." Another explained, "The women I see are very professional; It's very relaxed—we meet and talk before. It's not rushed. You pay for that better service with escort agencies. You know where you stand with the women. You know it's a business deal for them, and you both know that it's up front and there are no complications, no involvement."

Many men stressed the commercial/businesslike nature of the encounter as a positive element: "It's a business deal. It's straightforward. I'm paying for a service and I'm happy with the service I get." Davidson O'Connell points to the contractual nature of transactions between prostitutes in European countries and their clients. She stresses that the contractual nature is explicit to the client who "would no more expect a prostitute to cuddle or stroke him or act as his companion after sex than he would expect a plumber to after fixing a leaking pipe" (1995, 48). Yet she acknowledges contradictions in the expectations of some who want to buy sex as a commodity but are critical of the impersonal/business approach of prostitutes. Hoigard and Finstad reported a contradiction in the views of clients in their Oslo study. On the one hand the majority of men reported that they go to prostitutes because there was no commitment but they also wanted "warm girls, increased intimacy, and understanding" (1992, 95). This contradiction was evident among several respondents in our sample who expressed a preference for women who "didn't rush them," "were friendly," "set them at ease," and "didn't charge extra for everything." They were critical of "cut throat" prostitutes and those who were "cold" and "unfriendly." Yet some men still identified the commercial, noncommittal, contractual structure of the encounter as advantageous. O'Connell argues that "many punters want to buy sex as a commodity, but do not want the exchange to be simply a contractual one." Indeed some clients in our sample wanted to purchase a commodity but as customers felt they deserved exacting "customer service." This reflects one element of the ongoing dynamics of power and control that are constantly being contested in commercial sexual encounters. It also highlights one of several contradictory meanings men in our sample who paid for sex attached to their behavior.

## Buying Commercial Sex and Hegemonic Discourses of Male Sexuality

An analysis of the meanings men attached to their involvement in commercial sex should examine these in relation to, not in isolation from, broader cultural constructions of male heterosexual identity.

### *Masculine Sexual Urge*

It has been argued that male sexual desire is socially constructed as an expression of a powerful urge; within this discourse men are constructed as active, predatory sexual initiators. As noted, many of the men interviewed also constructed their sexual desire as something overwhelming and powerful. They shared a belief that their behavior was a reasonable, normal expression of male sexuality. It was "normal" for men to have several sexual partners, and the majority intended to continue their involvement in commercial sex. Those men who reported that they paid for sex because their partner wouldn't have sexual relations with them or wouldn't do specific things reasoned that it was normal and acceptable to "get it elsewhere," especially if their partner wasn't satisfying their sexual "needs" and "desires."

### *Performance Pressure*

As a result of this construction it is argued that sex is one area in which men feel pressured to prove their masculinity. As a result, they argue sex becomes surrounded by anxieties about performance and achievement. One man, who reported that he had spent considerable amounts of money on various treatments for impotency, explained that he went to a prostitute because of the sexual problems he was experiencing: "I'm impotent. The women are very good. There's one woman I see who's very patient." He explained that he was embarrassed by the difficulties he was experiencing and that he felt unable to deal with his inadequate sexual performance within a noncommercial sexual relationship. As a paying customer in a paid encounter, he felt pressures on him to perform were reduced. Yet it is important to note that the majority of respondents reported that they were comfortable with their sexual performance in noncommercial encounters.

### *Intimacy/Sexuality*

At a fundamental level the majority of men in our sample, whether single or involved with a noncommercial partner, made a clear distinction between sex and love/emotional involvement. As noted earlier, many men referred to the encounter as a "business"/contractual deal. The distinction between sex and emotional involvement/intimacy enabled many men with noncommercial partners to justify and rationalize their commercial sex involvement. According to some theorists, this dichotomous approach to sex and intimacy is not something confined to men who pay for commercial sex (Seidler 1992). According to Seidler, a powerful hegemonic discourse of masculinity

is linked with control, strength, dominance, and rationality and not vulnerability, submission, and the expression of a wide range of emotions. He argues that to maintain their sense of masculinity, many men learn to think of sexuality in terms of conquest, control, and dominance. Therefore to maintain a particular masculine identity, men tend to separate sex and intimacy: "for many men sexuality often tends to be relatively isolated from intimacy and relationships. It is as if men control threats to our masculinity through this very separation."

Seidler argues that "getting off" with a woman is a way of affirming self esteem and masculine identity. At the root of this feeling, he argues, is a fear of vulnerability and rejection: "It is as if we want to deny the link between sexuality and vulnerability. As men we often have sex without vulnerability, for when we are vulnerable we fear that we can be rejected. This is not simply a matter of being rejected as individuals but of our own masculinity being brought into question." Therefore men attempt to sustain a sense of control in sexual relationships: "So it is that control becomes a crucial issue, because in controlling our partners we minimize the risk of rejection. . . . It is we who do, or order what is to be done to us. It is as if we have to maintain control of the sexual activity to protect ourselves." For many men in this research, commercial sex involves an encounter in which sex can be experienced with no intimacy or expectation of intimacy. Located as the customer, male clients in this research also felt that if they specify what service is to be provided, they control the encounter. Hence, in such encounters they can feel in control and securely masculine.

### *Commodification/Objectification*

No men questioned the notion of paying women for sexual services. This seemed to be universally accepted by the respondents, so much so that it was normalized. McCleod (1982) argued that "much of what men want from prostitution is a matter of self-centered gratification. The primacy accorded to men's sexual urges rules the day, as does the expectation that women will offer sex in return for donations of goods or money; though such phenomena extend through male/female sexual relations at large and are not confined to prostitution alone." Several men explicitly implied that paying for sex was really the bottom line dynamic in many noncommercial male-female relationships: "Why go through all the hassle of buying drinks for a woman, taking her out for a meal when you don't even know if you'll get anywhere? You might as well just pay a prostitute." In other words, for some men, even non-commercial relationships with women involved negotiation and exchange for sex. The sexual objectification of women working as prostitutes expressed as the commodification of sex was taken for granted by respondents.

Many feminist researchers and theorists have pointed to a mainstream culture that sexually objectifies women. Women become something a man possesses and this process is eroticized (Scully 1990). These researchers have argued that this impacts on male sexual identity and pleasure. Seidler (1989) argues that this objectification of the sexual partner complements the separation of intimacy from sexuality. If the sexual partner is an object, it is easier to reject feelings/concern for them and maintain greater emotional control. Hence, objectification of the sexual partner is a process not confined to the commercial sex encounter.

Yet respondents did make one important distinction between nonprostitute women and women working as prostitutes. One recurring theme among the men was their feeling that a woman working as a prostitute would be willing to do "anything." Although many men acknowledged that prostitutes had ordinary lives like other women and hence had a role beyond selling sex, they viewed women who worked as prostitutes as a special category of woman sexually. One man commented: "They're different from women you can meet in clubs. They're happy to do whatever you want." Another said, "You can get more out of them. They're more willing to do different things." McKeganey (1996) also commented on the view expressed by some men that you could "ask a prostitute to do anything" and that prostitutes were "no more than the sex they sold." He has argued that such attitudes could encourage violence against women. If prostitutes become mere sexual objects to be bought, then the potential to disregard their rights is heightened. The view expressed by some that men could ask for anything conflicts with statements of women who were very clear about what they would and wouldn't do. McKeganey and Barnard (1996) noted that encounters between prostitutes and clients involve dynamics of power and control and as such the potential for conflict.

## Concluding Comments

Our research suggests that the meanings and motivations of men who pay for sex in Merseyside are diverse. Understanding these motivations requires not that we approach these men as a product of a deviant sexuality, but that we locate their behavior in relation to wider cultural constructions of male sexuality. If there is some validity in Seidler's analysis, then men's separation of sex from intimacy attempts to maintain a sense of control over sexual encounters and the objectification of the sexual partner. Played out in the commercial sex encounter, these dynamics fit neatly with broader dynamics that are part of one powerful social construction of male sexual identity. Indeed they could be understood as extensions of components of male sexual identity present in many noncommercial sexual encounters. Therefore, I would sug-

gest that the motivations of the men who pay for sex in this sample can be understood not as the product of a deviant sexuality but as the shaping of a persistently hegemonic discourse of male sexuality that impacts on male sexual identity.

However, I am not suggesting a reductionalist analysis of masculinity, male sexuality, and sexual motivations as uncomplicated monoliths. There are other discourses of masculinity. Male sexual experiences, expression, and identities are diverse, often contradictory and multistranded (Brod and Kaufmann, 1994; Morgan 1994). This was reflected in the varied and often contradictory meanings the men in this sample attached to their commercial sex involvement.

Methodologically, researchers are still developing creative ways of contacting and working with male clients. One area that needs to be further developed is collaborative work that involves sex workers and their clients more directly in the research process.

To develop a comprehensive understanding of prostitution, researchers and policymakers must pay further attention to the men who pay for sex. Making male clients visible raises new and challenging questions that must be explored if we are to come closer to mapping the socioeconomic and cultural conditions that shape prostitution.

## Note

1. This research was funded by Liverpool City Council, Liverpool City Challenge, and Liverpool City Centre Partnership.

## References

- Barnard, M., N. McKeganey, and A. Leyland. 1993. Risk behaviours among male clients of female street prostitutes. *British Medical Journal* 307: 361-62.
- Brittan, A. 1989. *Masculinity and Power*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Brod, H., and M. Kaufman, eds. 1994. *Theorizing Masculinities*. Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage.
- Day, S., and H. Ward 1990. The Praed Street project. In *AIDS, Drugs and Prostitution*, edited by M. Plant. London: Routledge.
- Day, S., H. Ward, and L. Perrotta. 1993. Prostitution and HIV: Male partners of female prostitutes. *British Medical Journal* 307: 359-61.
- Faugier, J., and S. Cranfield. 1995. Researching male clients of female prostitutes: The challenge for HIV prevention. *AIDS Care* 7: 1.
- Faugier, J., C. Hayes, and C. Butterworth. 1992. *Drug Using Prostitutes: Their Health Care Needs and Their Clients*. Manchester: University of Manchester, Department of Nursing.

- Graaf, R., et al. 1992. Prostitution and the spread of HIV. In *Safe Sex in Prostitution in the Netherlands*. Mr. A. de Graaf Institute, Westermarkt 4, 1016 DK Amsterdam.
- Hearn, J. 1992. *Men in the Public Eye*. London: Routledge.
- Hoigard, C., and L. Finstad. 1992. *Backstreets: Prostitution, Money and Love*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Johnson, A., J. Wadsworth, K. Wellings, and J. Field. 1994. *Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Kinnell, H. 1989. Prostitutes, their clients, and risks of HIV infection in Birmingham. Occasional Paper, Birmingham Department of Public Health.
- Kinnell, H., and R. K. Griffiths. 1989. Male clients of female prostitutes in Birmingham, England: A bridge for transmission of HIV? Central Birmingham Health Authority, Department of Public Health.
- Leonard, T. 1990. Male clients of female street prostitutes: Unseen partners in sexual disease. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 4, no. 1: 41-55.
- McCleod, E. 1982. *Women Working: Prostitution Now*. London: Croom Helm.
- McKeganey, N. 1996. Sex in the shadowlands. *Guardian*, May 29.
- . 1994. Why do men buy sex and what are their assessments of the HIV-related risks when they do? *AIDS Care* 6, no. 3: 289-301.
- McKeganey, N., and M. Barnard. 1996. *Sex Work on the Streets: Prostitutes and Their Clients*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Morgan, D. 1992. *Discovering Men*. London: Routledge.
- . 1994. Theater of war: Combat the military and masculinities. In *Theorizing Masculinities*, edited by H. Brod and M. Kaufman. Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage.
- O'Connell, J. Davidson. 1995. British sex tourists in Thailand. In *(Hetero)Sexual Politics*, edited by M. Maynard and J. Purvis. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Seidler, V. J. 1989. *Rediscovering Masculinity: Reason, Language and Sexuality*. New York: Routledge.
- Seidler, V. J., ed. 1992. *Men, Sex and Relationships*. London: Routledge.
- Scully, D. 1990. *Understanding Sexual Violence*. Cambridge: Polity.

# MEN WHO BUY SEX: PRELIMINARY FINDINGS OF AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

CHRIS ATCHISON, LAURA FRASER, AND JOHN LOWMAN

From a theoretical point of view, the client is central to the study of prostitution. Without him, there is no sex trade. Politically, the client is central because prostitution is held out to be the quintessential instance of the male sexualization, commodification, and exploitation of women. From the point of view of policymakers the client is central because he represents an obvious site of social intervention, be it in the name of protecting neighborhoods and preventing nuisance and/or preventing sexual exploitation of children and violence against women who prostitute. And yet we know very little about the client. To help fill this gap, the Province of British Columbia, Canada, funded a two-phase study of men who buy sex (and women sex buyers too, if we can contact any).<sup>1</sup> In this chapter we present the preliminary findings from this research.

## Two Phases of Research

The research comprises six components:

### *Phase 1*

- Review of the anglophone literature on the client and development of a questionnaire on "Sex and Sexuality in the 1990s, with a Focus on Men Who Buy Sex."
- A description of the content of court files of men charged in Vancouver, British Columbia, under Canadian Criminal Code section 213 (communicating in a public place for the purpose of buying sexual services).



- Continuation of previous descriptive analyses (see Lowman 1989; Lowman and Frasier 1996) of "bad date sheets" distributed in Vancouver.

## Phase 2

- Distribution via Internet of the questionnaire on "Sex and Sexuality" developed in Phase 1. The Internet survey requests responses from residents of Australia, Canada, England, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Scotland, the United States, and Wales.
- Distribution of a version of the same survey for clients in British Columbia, Canada. (The two surveys are the same, except for sections on geographic sex purchasing patterns and prostitution law.)
- Interviews with clients in Canada.

The first phase of the study was completed in 1996 (Atchison 1996; Lowman, Atchison, and Frasier 1996). The second phase was completed in April 1997 (Atchison 1997; Lowman, Atchison, and Frasier 1997).

In this chapter we describe the extant literature on the client, and then present an overview of the court file study and some preliminary findings from the Internet questionnaire.

## Research on the Client in Britain, Europe, and the United States

### *Psychiatry and Psychotherapy: Pathologizing the Buyer*

Up until the past five or so years, there have been only a few studies of buyers of sex. One of the earliest systematic investigations of the client was by psychotherapist Edward Glover (1943). Like their female counterparts who sell sex, Glover argued, men who buy sex suffer a psychopathological condition, a regression to an infant stage of sexual development in which the child focuses its sexual desire on the parent of the opposite sex. The pathology occurs when adults subconsciously continue to separate "sacred" (emotional) and "profane" (erotic) love. Following Freud, Glover maintains that this separation first occurs when the infant's sexual attraction for the parent of the opposite sex is inhibited and idealized love or family love is encouraged. During normal development into sexual adulthood, sacred and profane love are reunited in a single object: the spouse. But for some people, the separation of sacred and erotic love continues subconsciously. In these cases of "regressive" sexuality, the adult cannot feel both sacred and erotic love for the

same person. For the male in this situation, because he can only experience sacred love with his spouse, he turns to a prostitute for sexual fulfillment.

Another psychotherapist, Albert Ellis, also worked in a therapeutic setting with an unstated number of men. In order to develop a "cure" for the sex buyer's "deviant" behavior, he investigated the reasons men give for visiting prostitutes. He concluded that it is a man's irrational or neurotic attitudes about himself, sex, his wife, or the prostitute that drives him to buy sex. Ellis concluded that, by tailoring therapy to the specific source of the neurosis, the irrational drive to visit prostitutes could be cured (1959, 346).

Psychiatrists Gibbens and Silberman (1960) likewise suggested a link between psychological problems and the patronizing of prostitutes.

### *Ethnography and Survey Research: Normalizing the Buyer*

In their extensive studies of sexual behavior, Masters and Johnson (1970) confirmed that there is a pervasive belief that the client is psychologically defective and disturbed. In this respect, there may be some overlap between clinical and lay opinion. However, when researchers other than psychiatric professionals have interacted with the client, a different imagery emerges.

To date, the most extensive research on the buyer was by Winick (1962). He used a snowball sampling technique to interview 732 clients in five major American cities. The survey examined what function paid sex performs in the so-called personality economy of the client, and how he perceives himself and the sex seller. Winick concluded that "visiting a prostitute serves a wide variety of functions for the client" and that "any one visit is so complexly motivated that it is almost over-determined" (1962, 297). He concluded that the "emotional meanings and overtones" of the visit to a prostitute are more important than the desire for sex and that "conscious and unconscious elements seem to be present in the client's perceptions of himself and the prostitute." In contrast to its psychiatric predecessors, Winick's survey did not produce evidence of widespread psychological pathology or personal difficulty that explained a man's decision to buy sex.

In *The Lively Commerce* (1971), Winick and Kinsie suggest that at least three factors need to be taken into account in understanding the demand for sexual services:

1. Patterns of law enforcement may determine when and how frequently men visit prostitutes. In order to better understand the dynamics of prostitution, researchers would do well to examine the tactics that clients use to avoid detection by the law, their spouses, and the community at large.
2. Because the function of prostitution changes over time, researchers

should record and describe the changing reasons that men give for going to prostitutes.

3. Social-ecological considerations might be important in a man's decision to pay for sex. In order to understand the myriad of motivations for prostitution use, it is important to explore the social ecology of the client.

Winick and Kinsie note that the psychological dimensions of buyer motivation have been largely ignored by social scientists, and they contend that in order to get a more complete understanding of prostitution, the motivations and general psychology of the client ought to be explored.

In what he refers to as a "participant observer study," Diana (1985) presents data from interviews with 501 clients he met at truck stops, roadside lounges, brothels, and massage parlors over a twenty-five-year period in the United States. The sample included men of all ages, 70 percent of whom said they bought sex at least once a week. Roughly half the men were described as having white collar or business and professional occupations. Twenty percent of the men were single, 27 percent were separated or divorced, and 50 percent were married. Less than half (41 percent) of the married men said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the sexual aspect of their marriage. When it came to their attitudes to prostitutes, 57 percent of the men were "ambivalent" and 26 percent had "positive" attitudes (the remaining 16 percent had attitudes that Diana described as either "patronizing" or "contemptuous"). A majority of men claimed to experience "impotence" either chronically (11.4 percent) or occasionally (48.7 percent) when they were with prostitutes. The primary reasons clients gave for visiting prostitutes were "regular partner unavailable" (20.6 percent); "variety" (19.6 percent); sexual "experience otherwise unavailable" (13.4 percent); "curiosity" (9.6 percent); "chance" (9.2 percent); and "strong sex drive" (8.6 percent). Many of the men said that the greatest attraction of prostitution was the release from obligation that it afforded. In the case of married men, the attraction is

the absence of risk of an emotionally intense love affair with a prostitute.

There is less guilt and less of a feeling one has betrayed his marital commitment. Single men, too, may want no emotional involvements. As one client expressed it: "this woman wants nothing, asks nothing, needs nothing. I don't need to please her, or be concerned about whether she's enjoying it. I can do what I want, and please myself." (191)

Of course, if for men one of the main appeals of buying sex is that "provides temporary relief from the obligations inherent in involved sexual and emotional relationships" (191), one can only wonder what women do for such relief.

In a study of 183 massage parlor patrons, Simpson and Schill (1977) gathered information about respondents' biography; personality; sexual knowledge and experience; sexual permissiveness; reasons for buying sexual services; and physical, emotional, and sexual satisfaction with the sexual services they purchased. They suggest that personality, a man's opinion of women, and various dimensions of satisfaction all play a role in men's sex-buying practices. Most of the respondents were married, lower-middle class, white males, between the ages of eighteen and sixty-seven. Clients were no different from non-clients in terms of perceptions of women, degree of self esteem, feelings of belonging, or sexual appeal. Indeed, there was nothing particularly unusual about these men at all, other than their decision to buy sex at a massage parlor, although Simpson and Schill point out that their sample may not be representative of sex buyers in general.

In a similar vein, Armstrong (1978) concluded that there did not appear to be anything particularly distinctive or "problematic" about the massage parlor customers he studied. Holzman and Pines (1982) likewise suggest that when we talk to the johns themselves, we find a very different picture revealed from the one rendered by the sellers of sex, and that the "data obtained . . . do not seem to support the stereotypical image of the purchaser." The stereotypical "loser" image does not fit. Their phenomenological research explored the feelings and perceptions of men who buy sex, in an exploration of the buying experience through the eyes of the buyer. To accomplish this, thirty males were interviewed about "their experience of prostitution." They concluded that being a client is a "process" (a series of interrelated decisions and acts), as opposed to a role (one who exchanges sex for money). In order to understand the "process" of being a client, it is necessary to understand the client's intent, the pursuit of the encounter, the encounter itself, and the aftermath. It is through this process that clients structure the objective reality of their encounter with a prostitute (Holzman and Pines 1982, 112).

Eileen McLeod (1982), who conducted in-depth interviews with twenty clients in England, gives further reason to doubt conventional stereotypes of tricks:

There are two influential explanations of why men go to prostitutes. First, men who do so are exceptionally isolated or a residual minority with particularly perverted sexual tastes, in the days of sexual liberation (Davis [1937]). A further explanation favoured by some feminists suggests that prostitution represents the macho desire for women as sex objects. (McIntosh 1979)

McLeod says that the picture obtained from prostitutes and their customers is substantially different and more subtle than these images in the literature. She concludes:

[First] prostitutes' clients cannot be dismissed as the perverted few. Secondly, going to prostitutes may reflect men's dominant social position in various ways. Their purchasing power sustains the market. Obtaining sexual relief through payment, whatever one thinks of the worth of the activity, is not unique to men but it is not proscribed for them to the degree that it is for women. Much of what men want from prostitutes is a matter of self-centered gratification. The primacy accorded to men's sexual urges rules the day.

From this perspective, prostitution is organized around the ability and proclivity of men to indulge in a self-centered sexuality, or what Gemme et al. characterized as a "brief uncomplicated sexual encounter" (1984, 134). As well as asking why some men buy sex, we also need to consider why more women don't.

From her research with sellers and buyers, McLeod reached the somewhat unconventional conclusion that "men too are victims of existing social structures" (59), in particular (1) the pressure created by the conventional male heterosexual role's emphasis on masculine prowess and dominance; and (2) the failure of the institution of marriage to cater to male sexual and emotional needs accompanied by the male fear of revealing this failure (90).

## A New Wave of Survey Research: Epidemiological Concerns

Over the past seven years in Britain and North America, a rather more concerted interest in the client has developed, and several fairly extensive client surveys involving from fifty to several hundred respondents have been published (e.g., Barnard et al. 1993; de Graaf 1995; Leonard 1990; Leonard, Freund and Platt 1989; McKeganey 1994; Pickering et al., 1992; Vanwesenbeeck et al. 1993a, 1993b). Although various disciplinary mandates have mobilized this research, one of the main stimuli for funding has been epidemiological. Concerns about HIV infection and AIDS has led to funding of general research on the sexual behavior of "high risk groups" (those groups of individuals who are sexually active with more than one partner and/or with intravenous drug users) such as the buyer of sex, in order to investigate the general risks they pose to themselves and others (Leonard 1990; de Graaf 1995; Vanwesenbeeck et al. 1994).

We draw from these studies substantively and methodologically, and we set out to emulate some of their methods for meeting interview subjects. Methods for contacting clients have included

1. distribution of questionnaires to clients by sex trade workers;
2. introduction of researchers to clients by sex trade workers—Thomas,

- Plant, and Plant (1990) with fourteen interviewers contacted 209 clients this way; McLeod (1982) contacted thirty-three;
3. female researchers standing in known stroll areas have distributed surveys when approached by would-be clients—Leonard (1990) contacted fifty clients this way;
  4. contacts with men treated for sexually transmitted diseases;
  5. clients contacted through radio talk show (Gemme et al. 1984);
  6. clients contacted through newspaper advertisements and interviewed in person or over the telephone—Vanwesenbeeck et al. (1993a) obtained ninety-one interviews this way, McKeganey (1994) obtained seventy.

The most extensive of these recent studies has been done in the Netherlands. The first study, reported in Vanwesenbeeck et al. (1993a) and de Graaf (1995), focused on epidemiological concerns. Vanwesenbeeck et al. reported on the results of a partially structured questionnaire/interview with ninety-one clients on the perceived costs and benefits of condom use in commercial sex transactions. The questionnaire/interviews also gathered information about a client's background, personality, interaction with commercial sex workers, how these factors relate to a client's decision whether or not to use condoms during commercial sex interactions, demographic data (age, marital status, education, and nationality), and sexual contact data (contacts, number and frequency of partners, sexual behavior, and condom use). The men were contacted by placing an advertisement in local newspapers and tabloids asking them to call and arrange a meeting with an interviewer. The results indicate that most clients use condoms. Those who don't use them tend to have a negative perception of commercial sex, commercial sex workers, and condoms, and have an "unrealistic" perception of personal risk due to a lack of knowledge about methods of infection (Vanwesenbeeck et al. 1993a, 90).

In addition, de Graaf used the research presented in Vanwesenbeeck et al. (1993a) to report on various epidemiological topics relating to commercial sex (all of which are reported in his 1995 monograph). In one study de Graaf examined how HIV is spread within commercial sex circles and then into the general population. Also, he investigated clients' experience of condom use in heterosexual commercial sex encounters in order to determine how effective condoms are in preventing the spread of HIV. He used structured interviews to determine the frequency with which condoms broke or slipped off during various sexual activities, and why they did so. This research indicated that condoms are frequently used by commercial sex workers with minimal failure and concluded that condoms provide good protection from disease for commercial sex workers, clients, and their noncommercial partners.

In a second study, a telephone survey, de Graaf (1995) examined commercial sex use, attitudes to commercial sex, motivation for purchasing

sexual services, social support, and understanding and fear of disease. In this study, de Graaf interviewed 115 clients over the telephone about alcohol and drug use during commercial social contacts and their relation to contraceptive use. He collected general demographic data, and information about frequency of condom use, alcohol and drug use, and sexual behavior during commercial sex interactions. Clients were recruited through advertisements in bi-weekly magazines and newspapers, and by snowball sampling. This research indicates that alcohol and drug use is not common in many clients and commercial sex workers. Alcohol use does not appear to be related to unsafe commercial sexual activities, whereas drug use may lead to unsafe sexual practices (de Graaf 1995, 126). Drug use varies among different types of prostitutes.

These studies indicate that most clients in the Netherlands use condoms during paid sex encounters, but they tend not to use them when they are with noncommercial sex partners (de Graaf 1995, 75). Condoms are used least by "regular" clients (those visiting commercial sex partners more than twenty times a year), ethnic minorities, those with less than a high-school education, and those who frequent commercial sex partners at street and window venues (de Graaf 1995, 158).

Epidemiological issues have also been examined in three Scottish studies of the client. In the first study by Thomas, Plant, and Plant (1990), 209 clients were interviewed about their alcohol and drug use and its relation to HIV risk behavior. The study used a structured interview schedule to examine demographic characteristics; alcohol, tobacco, and drug use; sexual behavior; health care and AIDS-related attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge. Commercial sex workers assisted researchers to obtain a snowball sample of customers. The results indicate that alcohol and illicit drug use are common among clients; however, use of alcohol and drugs is not related to use/nonuse of condoms. Furthermore, there is little evidence that HIV is spread through commercial sex (Thomas, Plant, and Plant 1990, 268).

Barnard, McKeganey, and Leyland (1993) interviewed 143 clients on their condom use and sexual behavior preferences with commercial and noncommercial sexual partners in order to determine the possibility of HIV being spread both within and from the commercial to the noncommercial populations. They used short, structured questionnaires to measure amounts of commercial sex, demographic information, types of commercial sex, STD (sexually transmitted disease) history, and condom use with commercial and noncommercial partners. Clients were contacted in genitourinary clinics, from newspaper advertisements, and through "cold contact" (where the researcher is completely unknown to the individual subject) on the street. The majority of clients in the study were between twenty-one to sixty-three years of age, employed, married, and had no history of STDs. The most frequently requested service is vaginal intercourse, and condoms are frequently

## Prostitution

used for commercial sex contacts but not for noncommercial ones (Barnard, McKeganey, and Leyland 1993, 361).

McKeganey (1994) interviewed seventy clients over the telephone about their attitudes to and perceptions of their commercial sex contacts. One of the main objectives of this study was to determine the clients' HIV-related risk behavior and identify ways to reduce risk. The telephone interviews were semi-structured, with a standardized pre-coded section asking about demographics, visits to commercial sex partners, preferred sexual acts, condom use, and STD history, and an open-ended response section asking about reasons for contacting commercial sex partners, appeal of commercial sex, assessment of STD risk, and communication with other people about commercial sex behavior. The clients were contacted through an advertisement in a local newspaper. The results indicate that clients visit commercial sex partners for a variety of reasons; however, the main appeal of commercial sex lies in the commercial sex workers' "willingness to do anything for money" (McKeganey 1994, 229). Although many clients believed that commercial sex workers may be HIV-positive, few clients believed that they were at risk of infection.

Leonard (1990) interviewed both sellers and buyers. Self-report data obtained from commercial sex workers were validated by the accounts of fifty clients. The study focused on type of sexual activity purchased, condom use, frequency of commercial sex transactions, and clients' perceptions of risk of HIV infection. The study included pre-coded and open-ended questions covering demographic variables, patterns of commercial sex use, frequency of sex in other venues and locations, desirable characteristics of commercial sex partners, and a detailed record of the last commercial sexual encounter. The interviewer posed as a street prostitute and interviewed would-be sex buyers (a method that is risky and ethically questionable). The results suggest that clients are the main determiners of condom use because they hold the economic power in the relationship. Also, clients adjust their behavior (e.g., the way they select partners) in the hope of avoiding infection by HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (Leonard 1990, 51).

Freund, Lee, and Leonard (1991) interviewed 101 clients about their sexual behavior in order to determine risk of HIV infection, and for the purpose of constructing a mathematical model to predict the spread of HIV. A short, open-ended questionnaire was used to gather information about the demographic characteristics of the client population, the nature of their activity with commercial sex partners, and sexual behavior during their last paid sexual encounter. The interviewer posed as a street prostitute and handed out questionnaires to would-be sex buyers. The clients interviewed had a well-established pattern of commercial sex use, most visited commercial sex partners on a monthly or more frequent basis, and had been paying for sex for an average of 5.3 years. Clients tended to visit the same commercial sex sellers or group of sellers. Clients reported using condoms in 53 per-



cent of their commercial sex contacts, and 72 percent of the time when the services they paid for included vaginal sexual intercourse (Freund, Lee, and Leonard 1991, 587).

## Canadian Research on the Client

### *Surveys of Clients*

In Canada over the past fifteen years, well over a thousand interviews were conducted with the sellers of sexual services. During this same period there were just two client surveys which between them yielded only fifty respondents (Gemme et al. 1984; Lowman 1989). In Vancouver, seventeen clients were interviewed by two women who had been involved in the sex trade (Lowman 1989, appendix 10), but because of the small number of respondents, the results are impressionistic. In Montreal, Gemme apparently made his contacts by appearing on two radio talk shows to ask clients for interviews (Gemme et al. 1984). He obtained thirty-three interviews this way, but only a brief account of the findings of this survey is available (133–36), including information about age, income, and marital status, the frequency of sexual purchases, and the general reasons clients give for visiting prostitutes (the most frequent of which was for “a brief, uncomplicated sexual encounter”) (134).

Some other information is available about men charged under the communicating law (Lowman, 1989; Moyer and Carrington, 1989) which we will return to below when discussing the results of our Crown file survey.

### *Sellers' Perceptions of Buyers*

In the anglophone literature, there are numerous social surveys with prostitutes, many of which include questions about the behavior and characteristics of buyers. Until recently, these have constituted the main source of information on the buyer. Also, several studies on the client have used data gathered from sex trade workers to help corroborate information from interviews with buyers (e.g., de Graaf 1995; Pickering et al. 1992). Rather than providing an overview of this extensive literature, we briefly review the results of one Vancouver study (Lowman 1984), and the “Juvenile Prostitution Survey” reported by the Committee on Sexual Offences against Children and Youth (CSOACY 1984). When it comes to descriptions of sex buyers, the results of these two studies seem to be fairly typical of this genre, although the CSOACY's interpretation of some of this information is open to dispute.

As part of the 1984 Vancouver Field Survey of prostitution (Lowman 1984), forty-eight sex sellers (mostly street prostitutes) were interviewed about their experiences in the sex trade. The survey included questions about buyers' demographic characteristics, sexual preferences, and behavior during sexual interactions. Also, respondents were asked about their general feelings toward their "tricks." They suggest that most clients are between twenty and fifty years of age (mostly over forty) and that they come from a variety of income brackets (mostly "middle class") (Lowman 1984, 227). The average client of the street commercial sex worker generally purchases oral sex and sexual intercourse in roughly equal proportion. Many women who work in the street trade report having antagonistic relationships with at least some of their clients. Some women, particularly those who work for professional pimps, hold their "tricks" in very low regard. Nearly 60 percent of the prostitutes interviewed said that their clients were "mostly nice guys"; 42 percent said that "some" or "all" of their clients were "jerks."<sup>2</sup>

The Committee on Sexual Offences against Children and Youth interviewed 84 males and 145 females under the age of twenty about their background and general experience selling sexual services on the street. This survey included questions about the general demographic characteristics of tricks, their sexual preferences, and the nature of the respondents' interaction with them. Respondents reported that the overwhelming majority of clients are male, and the majority are thirty to forty-nine years of age, married, and "middle class" (CSOACY 1984, 1055). They apparently come from all walks of life. When it came to the motivation of sex buyers, respondents reported that many tricks had "sexually unfulfilling home lives or went to prostitutes in order to engage in a wider variety of sexual acts" (particularly oral sex) that they would not otherwise experience.

Young males suggested that one kind of trick is the "homosexual" man who has not managed to "come out of the closet." Prostitution is the only way they can experience a stigmatized sexual relationship. Many respondents, male and female alike, portrayed buyers as "socially inadequate" and "lonely." The committee concluded that most sellers

regard their clients either with hostility or as being pathetic, contemptible or disgusting individuals. The tricks were often portrayed as being physically unattractive persons with whom the young prostitutes found it distasteful and unpleasant to engage in sexual acts. (CSOACY 1984, 1055)

Although there is no doubt that this characterization captures the opinions of many street prostitutes, it is much too one-sided. Indeed, the Badgley Committee's appropriation of its subjects' voices gives a better impression of the committee's opinion of clients than it does its subjects, at least some of whom did not project this very negative imagery. Also, it is important to remember

that these surveys are mostly confined to the street prostitution trade. We have no idea what escorts and massage parlor workers think of their clients.

## Client Population Size Estimates: Some International Comparisons

We are aware of only one Canadian study that estimates the proportion of the adult male population who purchases sexual services. The study, one of a series done as background research for the Fraser Committee, examined Canadians' attitudes toward and perceptions of pornography and prostitution (Peat Marwick 1984, 5). In order to determine the extent to which respondents participated in "sexual bargaining activities," they were asked whether they had ever paid for sex or previously accepted money for sex. The survey found that 4 percent of male respondents ( $n = 989$ ) admitted to having paid for sex one or more times, and that less than 1 percent of the survey respondents had accepted money in exchange for sex (the percentage of females is not given).

Studies in other countries vary widely in terms of the estimates they yield of the proportion of men who buy sex. Beginning with U.S. studies, Kinsey, Pomeroy, and Martin (1948) reported that 69 percent of U.S. men they questioned had sex with prostitutes at some time in their life (see also Winick 1962; Winick and Kinsie 1971, 185), while 15 to 20 percent visited a few times a year. In the 1970s Reinisch et al. found that 30 to 45 percent of U.S. men had visited a prostitute (de Graaf 1995, 14). Using data from the 1993 National Health and Social Life Survey, Sullivan and Simon (1997) found that 18 percent of males aged eighteen to fifty-nine in 1993 reported having "paid a woman to have sex" (note: male-male and male-transgender commercial transactions are excluded). They note that of men who had served in the military ( $n = 409$ ), 36 percent had paid for sex, in contrast to men who had no military experience ( $n = 1,101$ ), of whom only 13 percent had paid for sex. There is also a clear relationship between age and having paid for sex: the rate was just over one in twenty in the case of the eighteen-to-twenty-four-year age group, as compared to one in three of the men aged between fifty-three and sixty years.

Turning to other countries, several studies are available. One study in the Netherlands estimated that 21.6 percent of all men said that they had visited a prostitute at least once during their lifetime, and that 4 percent of heterosexual men surveyed in Amsterdam had visited a prostitute at least once in the previous year (de Graaf 1995, 15). Prieur and Taksdal (1989) estimated that 13 percent of Norwegian men had paid for sexual contact with a prosti-

tute (cited in Finstad and Hoigard 1993, 209). Johnson, Wadsworth, and Elliott (1989) estimated that 3.6 percent of British men had been to a prostitute, although another British study (reported in de Graaf 1995, 15) indicated that this number could be as high as 6.4 percent, and that older married men were more likely to visit prostitutes than their younger, unmarried counterparts. A French study estimated that 3.3 percent of French men had paid for a prostitute in the previous five years (de Graaf 1995, 16). Melbye and Biggar (1992) estimated that 13.1 percent of men in Denmark had visited a prostitute. And the Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly upon Prostitution, Parliament of New South Wales (1986) estimated that anywhere from 7,000 to 9,600 clients visited the state's prostitutes in one day. The committee estimated that from 1,400 to 1,950 persons worked in brothels, escort services, and on the street at any given time.

These European estimates are much lower than Southeast Asian equivalents. Studies of Thai men produce the largest estimates of the proportion of men who buy sex. Nopkesorn, Mastro, and Sangkharomya (1993) estimated that roughly three quarters of northern Thai men had at least one sexual experience with a prostitute, and Celentano, Nelson, and Suprasert (1993) reported that 81.1 percent of a sample of northern Thai men (average age twenty-one years) had at least one sexual experience with a prostitute, while 69.5 percent had paid for sex at least once during the year prior to being surveyed. McCaghy and Hou (1993) estimated that 42 percent of the Taipei male population had during their lifetime visited a prostitute at least once, 82 percent of whom reported that they had visited a prostitute on more than one occasion.

Several estimates for African populations are provided by the research of the Global Programme on AIDS/World Health Organization, which estimated that the proportion of men using prostitutes during the year prior to being surveyed was 11 percent in the Ivory Coast, 10 percent in Lesotho, 8 percent in Togo, and 13 percent in Kenya (Carael et al. 1991).

## Explaining the Gender Structure of Prostitution

When it comes to the primary overarching gender structure of prostitution—male buyers, female sellers—two types of determinism have prevailed: biological and sociological.

At the heart of biological determinism is the idea that there is an essential difference between the sexes, a difference usually described in terms of the alleged contrasting "sex drives" of men and women. One version of this type of causation theory is the sociobiology of Burley and Symanski (1981), which purports to identify two biological and three sociological "precondi-

tions" of prostitution. Ultimately, though, at the core of the explanation is a genetic imperative that selects men to be promiscuous and women to be monogamous, and without this fundamental and essential difference between the sexes, prostitution would not have the basic gender structure that it does.

Even in some attempts to construct a self-consciously sociological explanation of prostitution, the sociological structure is built on a biological foundation. Such is the case with Kingsley Davis's (1937) functionalist explanation of prostitution. For Davis, while the manifest function of prostitution is to provide sex for money, its latent, and much more important, function is to resolve a sexual double standard that requires women to be chaste prior to marriage and monogamous afterwards, but allows men to be promiscuous. Prostitution provides the resolution to the obvious contradiction in the sexual double standard: if women are supposed to be monogamous, then who are men supposed to be promiscuous with? The institution of prostitution is a principal method for resolving this contradiction and, in so doing, becomes a guardian of the family and the value-system that supports it. When it comes to why the double standard exists, Davis offers a hydraulic model of sexuality—because of their greater sex drive, men tend to be more promiscuous than women. When their desire for sex cannot be fulfilled, they need an outlet. In this rendition, prostitution becomes the safety valve for the male sex drive.

In challenging the biological assumptions underlying most of these theories of prostitution, Mary McIntosh (1979) struck at the heart of the matter when she posed the question: "Do male/female differences in sexual needs really exist, or are they related to a specific social ideology?" She concluded that there are at least three possible answers to this question: (1) "differences are socially scripted: if males and females act differently, it is because they are scripted to learn differently"; (2) "women's sexuality is suppressed by men in the interests of patriarchy . . . so their sexual expectations and opportunities are limited and they are prevented from realizing their full potential"; and (3) "differentiation of sexuality, along with other orientations, occurs in the history of each individual in an infancy in which mother and father play specific different parts."

Although there are many "feminisms," probably most feminists would agree that in Western (and many other) societies, prostitution is, among other things, a patriarchal social relation, the quintessential expression of male exploitation and commodification of women.<sup>3</sup> Where feminists differ is in how they explain the origins and meaning of patriarchy, and how they characterize sex work—from Barry's (1979) image of all prostitution as sexual slavery to Bell's postmodernist rejection of any such grand narrative in favor of a more complex analysis of power in which prostitution represents resistance as well as subjugation. For many feminists prostitution has no single transhistorical and transcultural meaning (e.g., Bell 1994; Shrage 1989).

## Explaining Which Men Buy Sex

Regardless of how we explain the gender structure of prostitution in Western countries, the fact remains that only some females (and even fewer males) sell sex for money, and only some males buy their services. In the Western literature, much of the theorizing at the individual level has focused on the female sex seller, with an eye to explaining the circumstances leading to her decision to prostitute. Until the arrival of modern feminism, much of this theory tried to establish that females who prostitute are *essentially different* from females who do not.

But in neither feminist theory nor in more traditional social science has much thought been given to why some men buy sex and others don't. In pre-feminist social science, and in some radical feminism, the biological underpinnings of more general theories of prostitution and sexuality provide a commonsense answer as to which men pay for sex: they are the ones who do not have an outlet for their (uncontrollable) sexual impulses. But that is the only thing that differentiates them from other men, in comparison with whom they are *essentially the same*; i.e., they all experience (uncontrollable) sexual urges, almost as if "sexual urges" defined "maleness."

When we canvass the literature for the opinions of researchers and their subjects—including accounts of people who sell and men who buy sex—we find the following array of "explanations" of why particular men buy sex:

1. In the face of *personal deficiencies*, most notably physical or social "unattractiveness," various male "losers" have to buy sex because it is the only way to satisfy their sexual urges. In academic parlance, these are men with various "psychological problems" related to their "malaise."
2. A variation of (1) suggests that, because of happenstance, like the death of a partner, some men buy sexual services because they are "over the hill" and find it difficult to get sexual partners any other way.
3. Because of their work, some men lack opportunities to meet sexual partners or often spend long periods apart from their regular sexual partners. Buying sex is a quick and relatively inexpensive way to satisfy their urges (one can only wonder why their female partners don't satisfy their urges the same way).
4. Because their sexual partners refuse to indulge in certain sexual activities, some men buy sex to fulfill desires that would otherwise remain only fantasies.
5. Buyers are men who are not sexually satisfied by their mates or do not feel they have "enough" sex.

6. Prostitution provides men with temporary relief from male sex-role obligations.
7. Prostitution offers "weirdos" (pedophiles) access to girls and youths.
8. Prostitution represents a primitive stage of sexual development. Men who buy sex are psychopathologically maladjusted because they have subconsciously regressed to an infantile stage of sexual development in which the child focuses its sexual desire on the parent of the opposite sex. The consequence is that they cannot find erotic satisfaction through their spouse and turn to prostitutes instead (Glover 1943).
9. Repression of sexual experiences during infancy and childhood produces psychological problems (particularly a sense of shame) that translates into a desire to buy sex precisely because of the moral opprobrium that is associated with prostitution.
10. Prostitution provides males with the illusion that they are sexually successful.
11. Radical, leftist, and some liberal feminists put an entirely different spin on the commercial heterosexual sex transaction by analyzing it in terms of *power*. The purchase of sex is an expression of male power over women.

When it comes to young hustlers' accounts of why their clients purchase sexual services, three themes recur:

1. Men who buy sex from other males do so as a way of fulfilling a (homo)sexual desire that they otherwise repress. Buying sex from male prostitutes helps keep the customer sexually satisfied while remaining "in the closet."
2. "Chicken-hawks" (pedophiles) like to have sex with boys, and "boys town" (the male prostitution stroll) is one of the best places to find them.
3. Because of various personal deficiencies (such as physical or social "unattractiveness"), men who cannot attract regular male sex partners purchase them instead.

Analysis of prostitution by males is not inimical to feminism, of course, because feminist perspectives draw attention to the *exercise of power* that generally characterizes commercial sexual transactions in contemporary Western (and many other) societies. As with female sellers, males who sell sex do so to a mostly or exclusively male clientele. The transaction involves an economically privileged man buying sex from a relatively young male, many of whom are economically marginalized. In the case of street prostitution, the seller typically left the home of his parents at a relatively early age, and is relatively unskilled, undereducated, and thus likely eligible for only the lowest paid positions at the margins of the job market.

### Summary

The various theories about which men buy sex can be distilled into six main propositions: (1) "physical unattractiveness" thwarts certain men's opportunity to satisfy their sex drive, so they buy sex from prostitutes; (2) "social unattractiveness" caused by psychological maladjustment thwarts certain men's opportunity to satisfy their sex drive, so they buy sex from prostitutes; (3) psychopathology rooted in early phases of sexual development causes some men to seek out prostitutes; (4) prostitution is a way for men to live up to cultural gender-role expectations; (5) prostitution is a way for men to avoid gender-role responsibilities; and (6) buying sex is one way that men express male power over women, particularly men who feel disempowered by women.

The first two propositions are linked to the more general explanation that attributes the gender structure of prostitution—male buyer, female seller—to the male "sex drive." The problem with such formulations is that empirical research on human sexuality does not show men to have more intense sexual desire than women. Indeed, the concept of a "sex drive" is misleading. It conjures up a hydraulic image of male sexuality. Some men may "think with their penis," as the barroom banter goes, but "sex drive" cannot be empirically generalized into a biological male imperative that explains prostitution. Rather, in Mary McIntosh's (1979) opinion, prostitution is a patriarchal social relation supported by the ideology of male sexual need.

Regardless of which explanation finds favor—biological, social, or biosociological—one thing is sure: as currently constituted, prostitution is a distinctly male way of expressing sexual desire, a male way of thinking about sex. But, depending on how it is conceptualized, it is not a ubiquitous male way of expressing sexual desire. Indeed, there is no single, essential male expression of sexuality.

## Method and Epistemology of the Exploratory Research

Although we doubt that the male sex buyer has any single "essential" nature that differentiates him from other men, the buyer is a distinct empirical object and subject of study insofar as he has directly paid money for sex. Because there is very little Canadian information about the buyer of sexual services, one of the main purposes of this exploratory research is to provide an empirical description of the men (and the women, if we can contact any) who buy sexual services. By resorting to the Internet as a means of contacting clients, we hope eventually to facilitate international comparisons as a way of situating the Canadian research.



In this chapter we do not discuss at length the general epistemological issues that characterize this (and all other) social research. But because we necessarily make epistemological choices in deciding what methods to use, it is worth briefly reflecting on the nature of those decisions. For epistemological purists with a firm conviction about what is "real," certain methods are ruled out automatically. That is not the case here. The approach we prefer to take is methodologically eclectic inasmuch as we take advantage of as many methods as possible. Although our methodological preference is for semi-structured taped interviews—preferably a series of interviews with the same men several months apart—few clients are willing to be taped. Our use of a self-administered questionnaire is not indicative of a preference for quantitative over qualitative methods, but of taking the best advantage of the opportunities that are currently available to collect information about men who buy sexual services. In other words, our approach is empirical but not empiricist.

The court file survey takes advantage of a relatively new information source to provide general information about the characteristics of men charged for "communicating." We were able to obtain data relating to cases that went to court between 1993 and 1995 (some of the charges were laid as early as 1991, but took many months to get to court). Data for charges laid in 1986 and 1987 (Lowman 1989, app. 3) are also available for comparative purposes.

The self-administered questionnaire includes questions about the "objective" characteristics of buyers (their gender, age, income, occupation, etc.), and their sexual behavior (age of first purchase, frequency of purchases, venues, preferences, etc.). By incorporating measures of various attitudes, and by being designed as a general survey on "Sex and Sexuality in the 1990s," not just client behavior, the questionnaire also attempts to ascertain if any subjective patterns distinguish people who purchase sexual services from those who do not. Although we do not set out in a hypothetico-deductive mode to test specific hypotheses, some of our decisions about what kinds of information to collect are based on speculation in the literature about what motivates men to buy sex.

One version of our self-administered questionnaire will be distributed over Internet, a communication medium that is only just starting to be utilized for social science research. The results of the Internet survey will be compared to the results of a similar questionnaire distributed in Vancouver (Lowman, Atchison, and Fraser 1997). The two surveys are the same, apart from the sections on geographical sex-purchasing patterns and respondents' knowledge of the law. In order to produce a control group of nonclients to compare to clients, the first half of the questionnaire was designed to be answered by male and female adults and concerns general sexual behavior and attitudes to sex and prostitution. The second half of the questionnaire focuses on client behavior. In advertising the Internet questionnaire, we invited any adult to respond, not just clients. Distribution of the British Columbia version of the questionnaire was targeted exclusively at clients.

Because of the limitations of questionnaire research we intend to supplement the data provided by the two surveys with more qualitative information from semi-structured interviews with up to twenty clients (Lowman, Atchison, and Fraser 1997). By using a more open format in the interviews we hope to avoid being overly constrained by previous research and remain skeptical of preconceived—perhaps even stereotypical—images of the client.

In the present chapter, we restrict our review to the results of the Crown file survey, and some of the preliminary findings of the first 392 Internet responses available at the time of writing (we anticipate ending up with roughly 540 respondents, including nearly 130 clients).

### *A Profile of Men Charged with Communicating in Public for the Purpose of Purchasing Sexual Services*

When the communicating law was enacted on December 20, 1985, it explicitly made the customer of the street prostitute liable to prosecution. Although enforcement of the law against customers and prostitutes has been inequitable in Vancouver (the charge rate for prostitutes has consistently been from two to three times the charge rate for customers), some 3,000 customers have been prosecuted. Our first description of customers comes from information obtained from court files on 440 of these cases from charges occurring between 1991 and 1995. We briefly compare this profile of men charged for communicating with the findings of an earlier study of 220 men in Vancouver who were charged with communicating (Lowman 1989, app. 3). The profile includes:

1. Information about the offense (date, time, number of accused, number of individuals in accused's vehicle, location, type of transportation used by accused, service request made, police operation, photograph of accused);
2. Information about the offender (age, marital status, area of residence, citizenship, ethnic origin, occupation, criminal record);
3. Information about court proceedings and case disposition (date of final court appearance, representation in court, plea, disposition, and sentence).

We examined 440 individual cases dating back to 1991 involving 434 accused persons (i.e., there were six repeat accused) in 416 separate incidents (nineteen incidents involved more than one accused). As a way to provide a context for interpreting the customer cases, we also examined one hundred prostitute cases disposed of in 1995 (we took the hundred most recent prostitute cases ordered by date in the biweekly reports of the Regional Crown Counsel office).

### *Offense Characteristics*

The majority of customers (83.9 percent) traveled alone. In forty-five incidents (10.3 percent), there were two men in a vehicle; in sixteen incidents (3.6 percent) there were three men; in eight cases (1.8 percent) there were four men; and in one case there were five. Most of the men charged were driving a car (67 percent); a van, truck, or RV (23.9 percent); or a bicycle (0.7 percent); only 8.2 percent of the men were on foot (the remaining 0.2 percent arrived by taxi).

Overall, the arrest locations demonstrate that most arrests are made in four of the seven main strolls in Vancouver that existed at various times from 1992 through 1995 (figure 1): the Victoria-Lakewood stroll bounded by Hastings and Triumph streets, on Vancouver's East Side (23.6 percent); the Quebec-Ontario stroll in Mount Pleasant (23.6 percent); the stroll along the Broadway strip in Mount Pleasant (23.2 percent); and, to a lesser extent, the Downtown East Side (15.7 percent). The stroll along First Avenue has largely been ignored by police, and very few arrests of customers have been made in the Richards-Seymour and Franklin strolls. These three areas have two common characteristics: they are all controlled by professional pimps, and they are mainly commercial land-use areas.

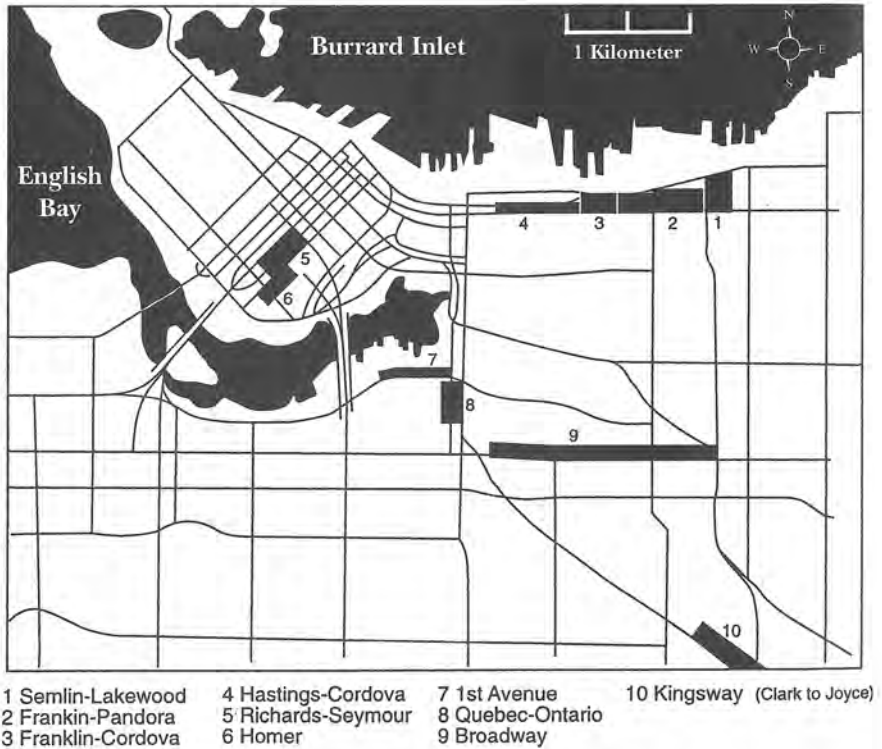
In order to provide a context for customer arrest patterns, a comparison was made between the sites in which 153 buyers and 100 sellers were arrested in 1995. The area with the highest proportion of charges against sellers in 1995 was Downtown East Side (34 percent); however, it accounted for only 0.7 percent of the men who were charged with offering to buy sexual services. The largest number of buyers (46.4 percent) was arrested along Broadway. An equivalent proportion of sellers (23 percent) and buyers (21 percent) were arrested in the Victoria-Lakewood stroll.

In only three of the four hundred cases were charges other than those relating to s.213 laid against customers at the time they were charged. There were two charges for resisting arrest and one for an indecent act (s.173, exposure—this man was naked when he approached the police decoy).

### *Client Characteristics*

The average age of buyers was thirty-four years. Of the men, 77.7 percent were less than forty-one years of age. The vast majority of accused were Canadian citizens (83.7 percent), and 10.4 percent were landed immigrants. Most of the men charged worked in blue-collar occupations, or in low- to middle-income professions. Of the accused buyers, 36.6 percent were employed in occupations such as manufacturing, trades and transportation/freight handling, natural resource-based occupations, or unskilled labor. Only 16 percent had occu-

Fig. 1. Vancouver Prostitution Strolls 1992-1995



pations that fall into upper-income, “professional” categories—indeed, almost as many customers were unemployed or on welfare (13 percent).

Ethnic origin was recorded in the terminology used in police Informations to Crown. The majority of accused were Caucasian (52.9 percent), and 15.7 percent were of East Indian descent. Almost all of the other accused were of Asian descent—5.1 percent were Chinese, 4.4 percent were Vietnamese, and 2.3 percent were Japanese. A further 5.3 percent were reportedly of an unspecified Asian or Oriental origin. About 3 percent of the accused were Native Indian and less than 2 percent were black. In contrast, 73 percent of sellers were “Caucasian” and 18 percent were Native Indian.

Where marital status was recorded, 42 percent of the accused buyers were married or in a common law relationship; 43.4 percent were single. Of the accused buyers, 48.9 percent lived in Vancouver, another 44.2 percent coming from the surrounding municipalities or the Fraser Valley. Only 2 percent of the accused men came from outside British Columbia.

Of accused buyers, 24.2 percent were known to have criminal records; in contrast, over 75 percent of sellers had previous convictions. Of the forty-two sellers for whom criminal record information was available, 76 percent had five or more convictions (including 57 percent who had more than ten convictions). The main types of convictions of customers include property crimes, driving offenses, and assaults/threats; for sellers they were property offenses, failing to appear in court, communicating, drugs, and assaults/threats.

When compared to their 1986-1987 counterparts (Lowman 1989, app. 3) there is a somewhat larger proportion of men recorded as single in the 1992-1995 cases (44 percent as compared to 35 percent in 1986-87). Otherwise, the two populations are strikingly similar. They are much the same in terms of their age (a mean of thirty-five in 1986-1987 as compared to thirty-four in the 1990s group), their Blishen socioeconomic status (in both groups the mean is 38), and their "racial" composition (which is almost identical). Also, the geography of residence of the two groups of buyers is similar. In the case of men living in Vancouver, the geography of customers' residence (figures 3 and 4) is roughly the reverse image of the geography of average family income (figure 2). It is mainly men from lower socioeconomic groups who are being charged and convicted. This pattern is at least partly explained by communicating law enforcement patterns: because of the difficulties female police decoys experience, there is little enforcement against customers on the "high track" (the Richards-Seymour stroll), which is not only where the highest prices are commanded, but it is also closest to the West Side residential areas of the city where the higher socio-economic status men live (Lowman 1990).

### *Disposition of Cases*

About 74 percent of accused buyers retained the services of a lawyer or were represented by duty counsel; over 90 percent of sellers had legal representation. Of those cases in which the plea was recorded, approximately 77 percent pleaded guilty. Sixty-eight percent of the accused buyers were found guilty (as compared to 84 percent of sex sellers), 7.8 percent were acquitted, in 8 percent of cases there was a stay of proceedings, in 5 percent of cases the accused were diverted, and in 11 percent the charge was dismissed.

Of the seventy-six men who pleaded not guilty, only nine (12 percent) were found guilty. Of the remaining cases, thirty-four men were found not guilty, twenty-six charges were dismissed, five charges were stayed, and two persons were diverted.

Among customers who were found guilty, the majority were given absolute discharges (51.2 percent) or conditional discharges (36 percent). About 8.7 percent were fined, and 3.4 percent were given suspended sentences. Two men were sentenced to the jail time they had already served—in these rare instances the accused were held because of outstanding charges.

Fig. 2. Average Family Income, 1985

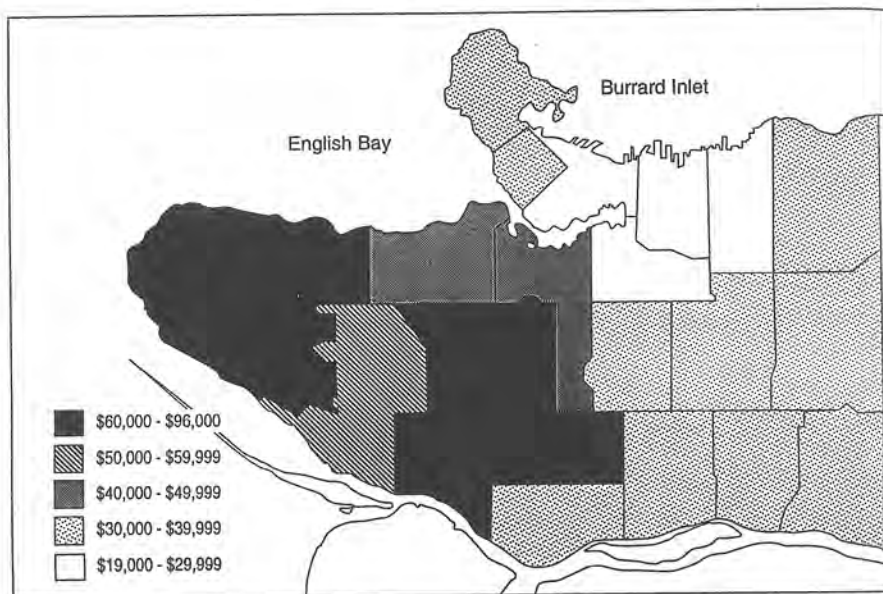
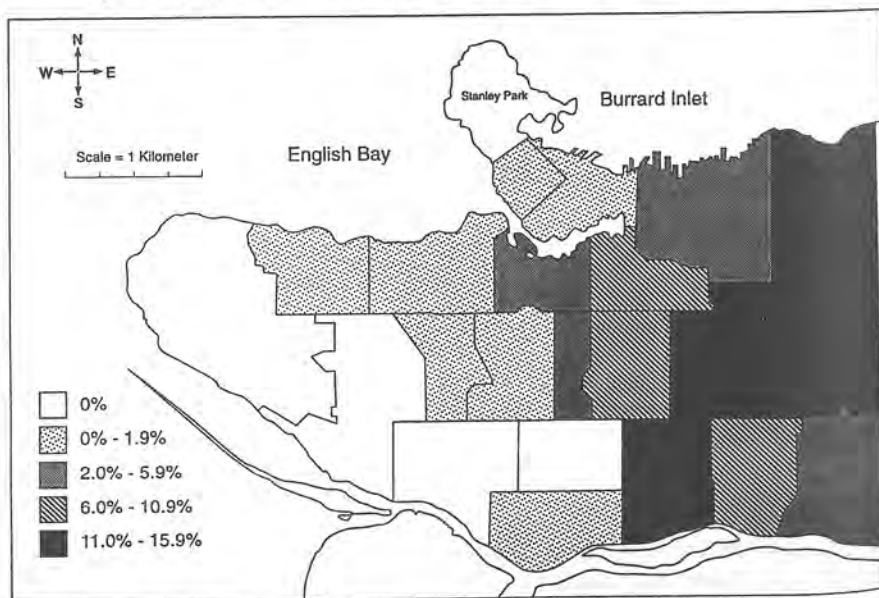
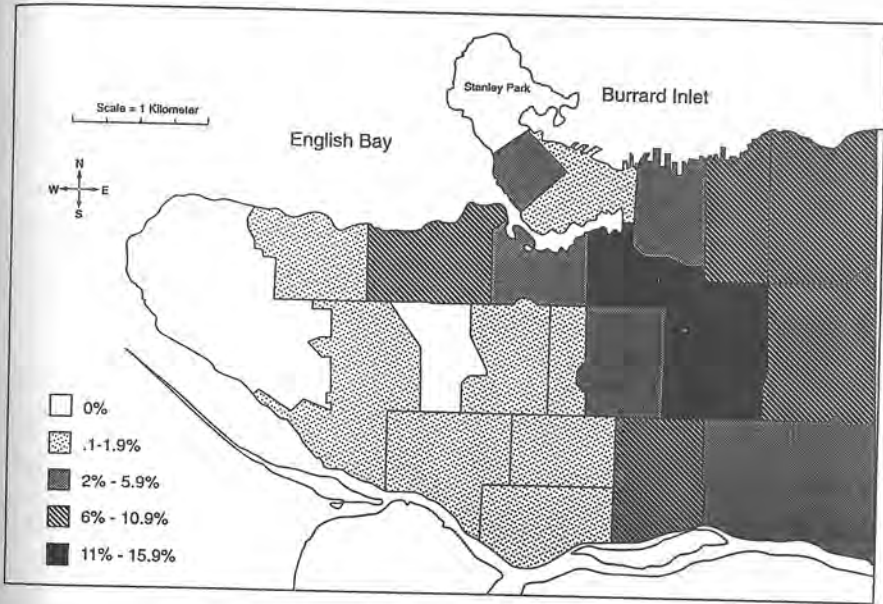


Fig. 3. Vancouver Men Charged with Communicating for the Purpose of Purchasing Sexual Services (n = 91). January 1986–June 1987: % of Total Per Area of Residence



**Fig. 4. Vancouver Men Charged with Communicating for the Purpose of Purchasing Sexual Services (n = 210). 1992-1995: % of Total Per Area of Residence**



Among sellers, 34.6 percent were given discharges, over 29.4 percent were jailed (many of these were sentences that took into account time already served), and 32 percent were given suspended sentences. As with sentencing in 1986 and 1987 (Lowman 1990, 67-69) sellers are still relatively much more likely than buyers to end up with a criminal record for communicating (87 percent of the buyers were discharged, and thus end up with no criminal record for communicating, as compared to 35 percent of the sellers).

In the 297 cases in which buyers were found guilty, 109 (37 percent) were put on probation (including all ten persons who were given a suspended sentence, 98 of the 107 persons who were conditionally discharged, and one person who was fined). Of the seventy-eight cases involving sellers who were convicted, thirty-nine (50 percent) resulted in a probation order (including sixteen of the seventeen conditional discharges, twenty-one of the twenty-five suspended sentences, and in two of the cases where jail time had been served).

## Preliminary Findings from the Internet Survey

The questionnaire on "Sex and Sexuality in the 1990s" includes a general survey on sex and sexuality to be answered by all respondents, and a focused survey on client activity.

The general survey includes the following sections:

- Personal information: age, sex, occupation, religion, national/cultural/racial identity, income, education;
- Family information: number/ages/sex of children; number/sex of siblings, marital status of parents, age and circumstances of leaving home;
- First sexual experience: age, partner involved, nature of experience;
- Childhood sexual abuse: age, person involved, nature of experience;
- Attitudes to sex and sexuality;<sup>4</sup>
- Descriptions of self;<sup>5</sup>
- Relationship with spouse/regular sexual partner: length of relationship, partner's occupation, feelings about relationship, emotional and sexual satisfaction with partner;
- Behavior with sex partners: victimization by and of sex partners;
- Epidemiological issues;
- Substance use;
- Sexual activity: type of activity and number of partners;
- Attitudes toward and understanding of commercial sex: various attitude and perception scales about buyers and sellers of sex;
- Attitudes toward street prostitution;
- Attitudes toward men and women.<sup>6</sup>

At this point, persons who had never purchased sex finish the questionnaire.

### *The Client Survey*

The second part of the questionnaire focuses on buyer behavior. This part of the questionnaire was written in anticipation of a mostly male response and designed primarily to capture the male heterosexual commercial sex experience in Western countries. The questions on male buyer behavior are organized as follows:

- Frequency and type of sex purchases;
- Factors influencing the decision to buy sex;
- Duration of encounters;



- Substance use during commercial encounters;
- General reasons for buying sex;
- Satisfaction with sex sellers;
- Purchasing activity: where, what venues, what time of day and week;
- Sharing information about commercial sex;
- (Vancouver survey only) Areas of street prostitution: use of street prostitution in and around Vancouver;
- Crime victimization and safety issues: victimization experiences and precautions taken to avoid rip-offs and other problems;
- Characteristics of the most recent sexual encounter: venue, type of service, duration, substance use, satisfaction with, reasons for, and feelings after;
- First sexual encounter;
- Geographic purchasing patterns;
- Legal experiences: knowledge of law, history of arrest, effect of laws on purchasing activity.

The questionnaire has 162 questions comprising 960 variables. Although none of the results of the British Columbia survey are yet available (there will be about fifty respondents), we can report the preliminary findings of the Internet survey, which was first posted on November 9, 1996, and ran until March 31, 1997. In this chapter we report some of the general characteristics of the first 392 accepted responses (those that were available at the time of writing)<sup>7</sup> as a way of introducing this research (for further information see Atchison 1997; Lowman, Atchison, and Fraser 1997).

### *The Respondents as a Whole*

The 392 respondents include 301 men (77 percent), 87 women (22 percent) and 3 transgenders (0.8 percent). The remaining respondent did not answer the question on sex/gender. Overall, their ages ranged from eighteen to sixty-seven years, with a mean of twenty-nine. In the calculation of the percentages that follow, missing values are excluded; where there are a large number of missing values, the number of valid cases is provided. Of the respondents who answered the question on marital status ( $n = 367$ ), 57 percent are single, 33 percent are married or live in a common-law relationship, and 9 percent are separated or divorced. The sample is dominated by respondents residing in the United States (77 percent), with the remainder living in Canada (13 percent), Australia and New Zealand (5 percent) and the British Isles (5 percent). Eighty-seven percent of the respondents are Caucasian. The majority of respondents are employed full-time (56 percent) or they are students (30 percent). When it comes to sexual orientation, 74 percent reported

that they are heterosexual, 16 percent are bisexual, 9 percent are gay, and less than 0.5 percent are lesbian.

Overall, then, the sample is dominated by young adult, white males from the United States.

### Clients

The client sample ( $n = 86$ ) is 95 percent male. There are two females and two transgendered persons. Both female respondents described themselves as bisexual, and in both cases the sexual activity with a female prostitute included a male partner as well (i.e., they were involved in a *ménage à trois* consisting of a prostitute interacting with a male and female couple). We do not yet have a single instance of a woman reporting that she had purchased sex from a man.

Eight percent of the clients had paid for sex only once in their lifetime. Another 33 percent reported between two and ten lifetime commercial sexual encounters, 32 percent reported between eleven and fifty lifetime sexual encounters, and 27 percent reported having purchased sexual services more than fifty times. Most of the clients had purchased sex in more than one venue: 55 percent had visited street prostitutes, 54 percent had visited escorts, 54 percent had purchased sex in massage parlors, 44 percent had met a prostitute in a bar or club, 26 percent in a hotel, 43 percent had contacted prostitutes through personal ads, and 44 percent had visited brothels.

### Comparing Clients with Men Who Have Not Purchased Sexual Services

Although we have not yet had a chance to compare various subgroups in the sample (e.g., men and women, clients and nonclients), some potentially important differences are evident in the comparisons we have completed. For example, the average age of clients is thirty-six years, while the average age of men who have never purchased sexual services is twenty-eight. One corollary of this age differential is that 45 percent of clients are married as compared to 27 percent of the other men, and 45 percent of clients have children as compared to 21 percent of the other men. Also, 74 percent of clients work full-time as compared to 49 percent of the nonclients, and only 12 percent of the clients are students as compared to 36 percent of the nonclient men. We have yet to control for the effect of age to ascertain if any of these differences are statistically significant.

At this point the only other comparison we have made concerns early sexual experience and sexual abuse.<sup>8</sup> There are two notable features of this comparison. First, clients tend to have become sexually experienced at an earlier age than nonclients. For example, of the men who have never pur-

chased a sexual service, only 19 percent had sexual intercourse prior to the age of sixteen (which is roughly the same proportion as the women in the sample) as compared to 40 percent of the clients. Second, a larger proportion of clients report incidents of childhood sexual abuse than do the other men—of those who have never purchased sex, 9 percent report some form of childhood sexual abuse, as compared to 27 percent of the clients (the equivalent figure for the women in the sample is 28 percent).

## Conclusion

Needless to say, because we are still in the process of analyzing the information yielded by the client survey, it would be premature for us to draw too many conclusions at this point. Rather, the purpose of this paper has been to provide a progress report on our client research. The experience of presenting some of the preliminary findings from the Internet survey at the March 1997 conference sponsored by COYOTE and California State Northridge served to remind us just how suspicious many people are of research via the Internet. "How do you know if the respondents aren't just bullshitting?" one person asked. To us, this issue is troubling regardless of whether the research is conducted over the Internet or in some other way. For this reason, several devices are built into the questionnaire that enable us to ascertain the internal consistency of respondents' answers. We are very encouraged by the results. Also, we would note that the profile of respondents is very much what one would expect to be yielded by an Internet survey—the sample is dominated by young white males—which suggests that, at least when it comes to the age, race, and gender of respondents, they have provided accurate information. Moreover, by using different methods to contact clients in Vancouver, British Columbia—a sample also dominated by white males—we will be able to compare not just "objective" demographic indices, but also the much more subjective attitudinal measures that comprise much of the survey, and which may well produce some of the most interesting results. At that point we will be in a better position to move beyond description and reflect on speculation in the extant literature about the causes and meaning of client behavior.

## Notes

1. Funding was provided by the Ministry of the Attorney General.
2. Because those were multiple-response questions, there is some overlap in the responses—i.e., some of the responses said their clients were "mostly nice guys," but that some were "jerks."

3. One exception to this is the style of argument popular among certain prostitution rights advocates (some of whom would consider themselves "feminist") who insist that prostitution is a form of work, and that a woman should be "free" to sell sex if she so desires.

4. Attitudes toward sex and sexuality are gauged by questions about a respondent's opinions about the moral acceptability and appropriate legal status of twenty-five different types of sexual activities, ranging from premarital sex to snuff films. The sexual activities included in this measure were derived from an Internet questionnaire developed by Perry (1995).

5. Questions 45 and 46 are based on psychological scaling techniques that attempt to measure *self-concept*. The first set of questions asks respondents how they feel about themselves in various ways, whether they are able to express emotions, whether they feel they can do most things well, whether they are able to cope successfully with day-to-day problems, and so on. The second set of questions asks how respondents would compare themselves to other people in terms of their physical attractiveness, how likely they are to lose their temper, how easy they are to get along with, and so on.

6. Attitudes to men and women are gauged by asking respondents whether they agree or disagree with a set of thirty-two statements about men and women on topics ranging from level of competitiveness to child care. These statements were derived from the 109-item Gender Attitude Inventory developed by Ashmore, Del Boca, and Bilder (1995).

7. Three cases were rejected because they were obviously not serious (in several answers one respondent claimed to have an "alien living in my arse," a second made a variety of utterly implausible claims, including having access to "A-bombs," and the third claimed to have had over 500 encounters with prostitutes over the past year). Roughly a dozen more cases were rejected because only a few questions had been completed. For further discussion of the criteria for excluding cases, see Atchison 1997 and Lowman, Atchison, and Fraser 1997.

8. Our definition of "sexual abuse" is based on offenses in the *Canadian Criminal Code* and reproduced in the questionnaire. *In the case of fourteen- to seventeen-year-olds, sexual abuse* includes interference, exploitation, incest, anal intercourse, corrupting a youth, procuring, pimping, sexual assault, and sexual touching by a person in a position of authority, trust, or a relationship of dependency. *Sexual abuse of person under fourteen years of age* includes interference, sexual touching, exploitation, incest, anal intercourse, bestiality in the presence of a child, corrupting a child, indecent acts, procuring, pimping, and sexual assault. In the case of persons aged twelve and thirteen, sexual touching is not an offense if it is consented to and the partner is within two years of age of the victim.

## References

- Armstrong, E. 1978. Massage parlors and their customers. *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 7: 117.
- Ashmore, R. D., F. K. Del Boca, and S. Bilder. 1995. Construction and validation of the

- gender attitude inventory. A structured inventory to assess multiple dimensions of gender attitudes. *Sex Roles* 32(11/12): 753-85.
- Atchison, C. 1997. Men who buy sex: A preliminary description based on the results from a survey of the internet using population. Master of Arts thesis, School of Criminology, Burnaby, British Columbia: Simon Fraser University.
- . 1996. Turning the trick: The development and partial implementation of a multi-dimensional research instrument designed for clients of sex sellers. Honours thesis. Burnaby, British Columbia: Simon Fraser University.
- Barnard, M. A., N. P. McKeganey, and A. H. Leyland. 1993. Risk behaviours among male clients of female prostitutes. *British Medical Journal* 307: 361-62.
- Barry, K. 1979. *Female Sexual Slavery*. New York: Avon Books.
- Bell, S. 1994. *Reading, Writing, and Rewriting the Prostitute's Body*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Burley, N., and R. Symanski 1981. Women without: An evolutionary and cross cultural perspective on prostitution. In *The Immoral Landscape: Female Prostitution in Western Societies*, by R. Symanski. Toronto: Butterworths.
- Carael, M., J. Cleland, L. Adeokun, and Collaborating Investigators. 1991. Overview and selected findings of sexual behavior surveys. *AIDS* 5(supp.): S65-S74.
- Celentano, D. D., K. E. Nelson, S. Suprasert. 1993. Behavioral and sociodemographic risks for frequent visits to commercial sex workers among Northern Thai men. *AIDS* 7: 1647-52.
- Committee on Sexual Offenses Against Children and Youth (CSOACY). 1994. *Sexual Offences against Children*. Ottawa: Department of Supply and Services.
- Davis, K. 1937. The sociology of prostitution. Reprinted from *American Sociological Review* 1937 in *The Sociology of Deviance*, edited by K. Stoddart. Richmond: Open Learning Institute, 1980: 232-49.
- de Graaf, R. 1995. *Prostitutes and Their Clients: Sexual Networks and Determinants of Condom Use*. Den Haag: CIP-Gegevens Koninklijke Bibliotheek.
- Diana, L. 1985. *The Prostitute and Her Clients: Your Pleasure Is Her Business*. Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas.
- Ellis, A. 1959. Why married men visit prostitutes. *Sexology* 25: 344-47.
- Finstad, L., and C. Hoigard. 1993. Norway. In *Prostitution: An International Handbook on Trends, Problems, and Policies*, edited by N. Davis. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press.
- Freund, M., N. Lee, and T. Leonard. 1991. Sexual behavior of clients with street prostitutes in Camden, NJ. *Journal of Sex Research* 28 (4): 579-91.
- Gemme, R., A. Murphy, M. Bourque, M. A. Neme, and N. Payment. 1984. A report on prostitution in Québec. *Working Papers on Prostitution and Pornography, Report No. 11*. Ottawa: Department of Justice.
- Gibbins, T. C. N., and M. Silberman. 1960. The clients of prostitutes. *British Journal of Venereal Disease* 36: 113.
- Glover, E. 1943, 1957, 1969. *The Psychopathology of Prostitution*. London: Institute for the Study and Treatment of Delinquency.
- Holzman, H., R. and S. Pines. 1982. Buying sex: The phenomenology of being a john. *Deviant Behaviour: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 4: 89-116.
- Johnson, A. M., J. Wadsworth, and P. Elliott. 1989. A pilot study of sexual lifestyle in a random sample of the population in Great Britain. *AIDS* 3: 135-41.

- Kinsey, A. C., W. B. Pomeroy, and C. E. Martin. 1948. *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*. Philadelphia, London: Saunders.
- Leonard, T. L. 1990. Male clients of female street prostitutes: Unseen partners in sexual disease transmission. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 4 (1): 41-55.
- Leonard, T., M. Freund, and J. Platt. 1989. Behavior of clients of prostitutes. *American Journal of Public Health* 79 (7): 903.
- Lowman, J. 1990. Notions of equality before the law; the experience of street prostitutes and their customers." *Journal of Human Justice*. 1 (2): 55-76.
- . 1989. *Street Prostitution: Assessing the Impact of the Law: Vancouver*. Ottawa: Department of Justice.
- . 1984. Vancouver field study of prostitution: Field notes, *Working Papers on Pornography and Prostitution, Report #8*. Ottawa: Department of Justice.
- Lowman, J., C. Atchison, and L. Fraser. 1996. *Men Who Buy Sex, Phase 1*. A report prepared for the British Columbia Ministry of Attorney General.
- . 1997. *Men Who Buy Sex, Phase 2: The Client Survey*. A report prepared for the British Columbia Ministry of Attorney General.
- Masters, W., and V. Johnson. 1970. *Human Sexual Inadequacy*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- McCaghy, C. H., and C. Hou. 1993. Taiwan. In *Prostitution: An International Handbook on Trends, Problems, and Policies*, edited by N. Davis. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press.
- McIntosh, M. 1979. The ideology of male sexual needs. In *Women, Sexuality and Social Control*, edited by C. Smart and B. Smart. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- McKeganey, N. 1994. Why do men buy sex and what are their assessments of HIV related risks when they do? *AIDS Care* 6 (3): 289-301.
- McLeod, E. 1982. *Women Working: Prostitution Now*. London: Croom Helm.
- Melbye, M., and R. J. Biggar. 1992. Interaction of persons at risk for AIDS and the general population in Denmark. *American Journal of Epidemiology* 135: 593-602.
- Moyer, S., and P. J. Carrington. 1989. *Street Prostitution: Assessing the Impact of the Law, Toronto*. Ottawa: Department of Justice.
- Nopkesorn, T., T. D. Mastro, S. Sangkharomya. 1993. HIV-1 infection in young men in Northern Thailand. *AIDS* 7: 1233-39.
- Peat and Marwick Partners. 1984. Canadians' attitudes toward and perceptions of pornography and prostitution. *Working Papers on Pornography and Prostitution, Report #6*, Ottawa: Department of Justice.
- Pickering, H., J. Todd, D. Dunn, J. Pepin, and A. Wilkins. 1992. Prostitutes and their clients: A Gambian survey. *Social Science and Medicine* 34 (1): 75-88.
- Prieur, A., and A. Taksdal. 1989. *A Sette Pris Pa Kvinner. Menn Som Kjøper Sex*. Oslo: Pax Forlag.
- Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales. 1986. Parliament of New South Wales. Sydney: Government Printer.
- Shrage, L. 1989. Should Feminists oppose prostitution? *Ethics* 99: 347-61.
- Simpson, M., and T. Schill. 1977. Patrons of massage parlors: Some facts and figures. *Archives of Sexual Behaviour* 6 (6): 521-25.
- Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution (Fraser Committee). 1985. *Pornography and Prostitution in Canada*. Ottawa: Department of Supply and Services.

- Sullivan, E., and W. Simon. 1997. The client: A social, psychological, and behavioral look at the unseen patron of prostitution. Paper presented at the International Conference on Prostitution, California State University, Northridge. March.
- Thomas, R. M., M. A. Plant, and M. L. Plant. 1990. Alcohol, AIDS risks, and sex industry clients: Results from a Scottish study. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence* 26: 265-69.
- Vanwesenbeeck, I., R. de Graaf, G. van Zessen, C. J. Straver, and J. H. Visser. 1993. Condom use by prostitutes: Behaviour, factors and considerations. *Journal of Psychology and Human Sexuality* 6 (1): 69-91.
- . 1993. Protection styles of prostitutes' clients: Intentions, behaviour, and considerations in relation to AIDS." *Journal of Sex Education and Therapy* 19 (2): 79-92.
- Vanwesenbeeck, I., G. van Zessen, R. de Graaf, and C. J. Straver. 1994. Contextual and interactional factors influencing condom use in heterosexual prostitution contacts. *Patient Education and Counseling* 24: 307-22.
- Winick, C. 1962. Prostitutes' clients' perceptions of the prostitutes and of themselves. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry* 8 (4): 289-99.
- Winick, C., and P. M. Kinsie. 1971. *The Lively Commerce: Prostitution in the United States*. Chicago: Quadrangle Books.

my psyche needed to be reprogrammed. I've never been married, and I've never had a girlfriend or a lover, as most of us would use those terms. My aversion to physical intimacy assured this.

One landmark incident took place when I was twenty-six years old. At that time, I lived with a twenty-year-old female roommate who was very much my type. I shared a complex and satisfying intellectual exchange with her, but when the conversation turned to sex, I became nervous and quiet. One day the two of us were exchanging back rubs, and for an added flourish I bent down and kissed the back of her neck. Her response was to yelp with glee and approval, and she then suggested it might be high time that she go ahead and seduce me. My reaction to her proposition was to become absolutely still and silent, as if paralyzed in mind and body. The moment passed, and years later I realized that my frozen response had been my body's way of saying no. Now, thanks to my interactions with sex workers, I'm certain that I've doubled my options. Should I find myself in a negotiable situation, I'm confident that I can now express either yes or no, mentally and physically.

When I finally appeared on the doorstep of my first full-service sex worker, I was still a virgin in the popular sense of the word. My demeanor was somber and ceremonial, which led to a strange though not unpleasant experience. For one thing, my melancholy and ritualistic approach caused me to focus too much on genital intercourse, something I'd told myself for thirty years I'd never do. As a result of my fixation, I was unable to attain an erection, and I couldn't be properly deflowered, in spite of often-valiant efforts on the part of the first three full-service prostitutes I visited.

After some trial and error, I retreated to the sanctity of the peep shows and lap dance theaters. In these venues the eroticism was high, but I put much less pressure on myself to perform physically. Consciously or subconsciously, I realized that I'd have to savor this meal in smaller bites. Especially helpful was the peep show, where for the first time I masturbated and had an orgasm in the presence of another human being, separated from my playmate by a barrier I call the glass condom. On my very next peep show visit, both the dancer and I had orgasms, hers occurring first. For over a year afterward, I documented many peep show visits by maintaining a "hers and mine" orgasm scorecard, but counting orgasms was never the central issue. What was exhilarating for me was that I was finally becoming comfortable negotiating with another person for sex, a subject that I had been unable to talk about a few years earlier.

In the lap dance clubs I was able to practice the more peripheral aspects of sexuality, beginning with mere physical closeness. I gradually stopped placing genitals at the center and learned or perhaps relearned to eroticize the whole body, and finally the whole experience, from greeting and negotiation to the physical scene and parting. Positive feedback from dancers helped immensely. I often received compliments on my warmth and atten-



tiveness, on my consideration and fairness. This praise from dancers was sometimes verbal, which may have been mostly show biz, and often physical, which I believe was mostly genuine. In any event, I came to believe that my behavior was more egalitarian than most other customers', and I no longer had any doubt that I was and am a feminist. I had established an internal positive feedback loop where I could sense that I was getting from each scene about what I had put into it.

The icing on this cake came just over a year ago, when I got into a conversation with Margo St. James about my experiences with sex workers. When I told her I'd lost my virginity to prostitutes, I meant that I'd finally become comfortable with what for me was a new kind of intimacy. My newfound skill and self-confidence transcend the act of bringing a particular two pieces of flesh together. I blurted out that with sex workers I'd learned how to have fun, to which Margo replied, "That's what it's all about." With sex workers as my teachers, guides, and coaches, I had developed a heightened sense of self-esteem and a new capacity for joy and playfulness that now spills over into all of the nonsexual areas of my life. I suppose I might have arrived at the same place through primal therapy or who knows what, but the path I took was most likely more enjoyable, and maybe even cheaper to boot.

I still hire sex workers, although my motivation is somewhat different now than it was four years ago. I was never very monogamous at heart, and I like having a variety of sexual partners. Adding money to the mix short-circuits the conventional courtship ritual and gives me access to partners I feel attracted to but who may not be attracted to me.

For me at least, it turns out that sex with a stranger can be quite intimate and hot, depending on the context and on the demeanor of the players. I agree with those who say that sometimes a higher level of eroticism can be achieved in a context where the emotional stakes are low. Especially in the early days of four years ago, it would have been very stressful for me to have done that kind of exploration with someone in whom I had a great emotional investment. I very likely would have died a virgin if I hadn't somehow gotten comfortable with physical intimacy, and sex workers enabled me to do that. At least for me, it's been a healing experience.

As a political person, I believe that decriminalization of prostitution is a pro-choice issue. Government has no moral authority to deny practitioners or their customers their sexual, personal, or economic freedom, just as it has no mandate to deny women access to abortion services. For me, the pro-choice position is that all adult consensual sex, including prostitution, should be decriminalized. Whether we're talking about abortion or sex work, the fundamental question is whether the individual or the government should decide what that individual may do with her or his own body. If anyone finds my choices to be immoral, that's fine, but when anyone uses the awesome power of the state to stop me from doing it my way, that's coercion, which

nonconsensual, and I say *that's* immoral. The government should stay out of the morality business where it can't produce a victim. Please note that neither I nor my service providers are complaining.

I fear that sex work may always be maligned because it's a melding of sex and commerce. The conservatives don't like it because it's sex, and the liberals don't like it because it's commerce. I wish they'd both get used to it.

## SEX WORKERS AND THE ELDERLY MALE CLIENT\*

M. C. SANTOS ORTÍZ, J. L. LAÓ-MELÉNDEZ,  
AND A. TORRES-SÁNCHEZ

Among the different elements that influence human sexual behavior, culture is of the utmost importance. Members of a society learn social behavior parameters and standards through the socialization process, which encompasses the whole of a person's activities, whether they are physical or mental, overt or hidden. Culture includes the norms, values, beliefs, and knowledge that serve as the guides for the society member's behavior. This shaping process begins at birth and is encouraged and maintained through a person's formal education, family, and religion and by the mass media, the law, and the human behavior and health professions.

One of the most important aspects of this process is learning the expression of sexuality. Culture shapes and channels sexual perception by providing guidance for viewing one's own self, one's own body, and one's sexuality, and also how to view one's own body and sexuality in relationship to others and their selves, bodies, and sexualities. Social control mechanisms are used to teach the individual to act, think, and believe according to preformed expectation and accepted parameters of sexual behavior.

In Puerto Rican society, as in many others, human sexuality is considered to be a private subject and often taboo, although subjects such as HIV/AIDS, abortion, and sexual harassment among others have forced us to discuss this issue in a more open manner. Considering that culture is of a dynamic and heterogeneous nature, even within one country, and that it is influenced by economic and political elements, the analysis proposed in this article is exploratory in its approach. We base the facts presented on a descriptive

---

\*Funded by the Committee for Scientific Research Integration and Development, Dean for Academic Affairs, Medical Sciences Campus, University of Puerto Rico.

study of knowledge about HIV/AIDS, risk perception, and sexual practices among a group of elderly Puerto Rican adults and a group of sex workers who offer sexual services to elderly males. Results from an HIV Prevention Need Assessment made in Puerto Rico in 1996 by the Puerto Rico Health Department and Puerto Rico's Community Planning Group will be also discussed.

Traditionally, people have related sexual expression to the following parameters: heterosexuality, coitus (penis-vagina penetration), monogamy, and exclusion of children and old people as sexual beings. In Puerto Rico, as in many other countries, sexual relations are generally regarded as being something for the young, healthy, and attractive. People, particularly the young, still frequently see sexual activity as a wasting asset that has no interest to anyone of more than sixty years of age. To many people, the thought of an elderly couple engaging in sexual relations usually provokes discomfort or distaste. In our culture it is often very difficult to imagine parents or grandparents enjoying masturbation, oral sex, and intercourse on a regular basis.

Masters, Johnson, and Kolodny (1992) indicate that despite the cultural myths about sexuality and older people, the psychological need for intimacy, excitement and pleasure does not disappear in old age, and there is nothing in the biology of aging that automatically shuts down sexual function.

In part, our cultural negativism about sex and romance in older people is a reflection of an attitude called ageism, a prejudice against people because they are old. Some of these ideas consider older people as being rigid, boring, talkative, senile, old-fashioned in morality, lacking in skills, useless, and having little redeeming social value. Some authors suggest that ageism in relation to sexuality is the ultimate form of desexualization: "If you are getting old, you are finished" (Alexander and Allison 1995).

Widespread stereotypes, misconceptions, and jokes about old age and sexuality can powerfully and negatively affect older people's sexual experience. Let us analyze some of these ideas.

## Interest

One principal attitude concerning sexuality and the elderly is the assumption that as people get older, interest in sexual relations decreases. Older people who speak of enjoying sexuality may be viewed as sinful, exaggerating, or deviant, for example, the "dirty old man." Those who express caring and physical affection for one another may be infantilized, defined as "cute," and ridiculed by professionals, age peers, and family members. These people grew up in a period of restrictive guidelines regarding appropriate sexual behavior and taboos relating to other forms of sexual activities such as masturbation. Many of these attitudes may reflect a Victorian morality that views sex only as

intercourse and intercourse only as appropriate for conception; sex for communication, intimacy, or pleasure is considered unnecessary and immoral.

The widely accepted attitude in our society that sexual interaction between older people is both socially unacceptable and physically harmful may have negative consequences for the older people themselves. Surrounded by those with such beliefs and fearing ridicule or censure, many older people may unnecessarily withdraw from all forms of sexual expression, thereby depriving themselves of the energy, vitality, and many other positive aspects inherent in sexuality, such as overall physical and mental well-being.

## Sexual Functioning

One of the most prevalent societal ideas is that age-related physiological changes detrimentally affect sexual functioning. Understanding the natural physiological alterations in sexual response associated with the aging process is an essential first step toward dispelling such myths.

Compared with age changes in other systems of the body, such as those in the eyes' focusing ability or the lungs' vital capacity, changes to sexual organs are minimal. Sexual function, judged by intercourse as well as by other activities, is maintained much better than most other functions.

According to Masters, Johnson, and Kolodny (1992), among the changes that occur in the male are a slower sexual response and a greater physical stimulation being required for erection. They cite:

1. The sexual response is generally slower and of diminished intensity.
2. During the excitement phase, greater physical stimulation and a longer time is required to produce erections.
3. The erection may be partial instead of full.
4. A longer period is required to reach climax and orgasm.
5. Decrease of volume and force of ejaculation.
6. Occasional lack of orgasm during the intercourse.
7. Increased length of time between orgasm and subsequent erections.

These authors conclude that although physiological changes occur with age, the capacity for both functioning and fulfillment does not disappear. The male's subjective level of pleasure derived from sexual activity does not change at all with age. They conclude that there are no known limits to sexual activity.

Impotence, the most common sexual disorder among older men, is influenced by both physiological (diseases, such as diabetes and vascular and prostate diseases; operations; use of drugs and alcohol) and psychological factors.

These negative ideas about aging and sexuality have contributed to the

neglect or avoidance of health issues such as sexually transmitted diseases in this population.

Of all male AIDS cases reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 11 percent have involved individuals fifty years of age or older, and 3 percent have been among persons over sixty (CDC 1996). In common with the general adult population, most of the AIDS cases are men. According to some authors (Whipple and Saura 1995), incidence of AIDS among older adults appears to be rising faster than in young age groups.

In Puerto Rico, most cases reported are also men. The distribution of cases among the sixty-years-and-older age group shows an increase pattern. In 1985, the incidence of male cases was 1.4 percent while in 1997 it had climbed to 5.3 percent (Puerto Rico Department of Health 1997).

When analyzing the mode of exposure, we found that the most prevalent type of reported risk factor for this sector of the population was related to sexual practices. In all the different age categories, sixty to sixty-nine, seventy to seventy-nine, eighty to eighty-nine, and ninety and older, heterosexual contact was the primary (63.2 percent) mode of transmission of HIV and homosexual and bisexual contact was the secondary (21.1 percent) mode of exposure (Puerto Rico Department of Health 1997).

Why is HIV so often overlooked in older people? In large part it is because clinicians do not consider them to be at risk. They may subscribe to society's stereotyping of older people as being sexually inactive and so they do not question their sexual histories. That same stereotyping also prevents older people, who may feel they are not supposed to engage in sexual activity, from telling health professionals and caregivers about their behavior or asking for information. Older gay men, who may have spent a lifetime hiding their sexual preference, may be specially reluctant to speak frankly. Intravenous drug (IV) use is another high-risk behavior that is wrongly assumed not to occur among older adults. In Puerto Rico 15.8 percent of males of sixty years and older cite IV use as the mode of HIV exposure. Many elderly patients who know that caregivers, family members, and friends will judge them do not disclose their HIV status or risk behaviors.

Some factors specific to older persons may increase their risk of becoming infected through sexual activities. Not all older people who are sexually active are in marriages or other long-standing monogamous relationships, and not all who have married have been active only with their spouses. Also, older people usually do not use condoms because pregnancy is no longer a concern and they do not see themselves as being at risk from sexually transmitted diseases. To obtain further information about this group, we conducted a study in the San Juan metropolitan area.

## Method

### *Participants*

A convenience (nonprobabilistic) sample of 160 persons of sixty years and older (sixty females and one hundred males) and sixty female sex workers were recruited. For this study, however, we shall only refer to data obtained from the elderly males and sex workers.

Elderly males were recruited in Multiple Service Centers in the San Juan metropolitan area. Sex workers were recruited through referral from a community-based organization that offers social and health services to elderly males. The criteria for entry into the study was having provided sexual services to elderly males (sixty years or older) within six months prior to the interview.

### *Data Collection*

After having obtained their informed consent, researchers collected information from each participant through a personal interview lasting from forty-five minutes to one hour. These interviews were conducted by experienced and trained health professionals or graduate students. Female sex workers and elderly females were questioned by female interviewers and elderly males by male interviewers. The structural interview included questions on knowledge of HIV/AIDS, risk perception and behavior, sexual practices, condom use, and health and sociodemographic characteristics.

Seven focus groups were also convened, four with elderly people (two all male, one all female, and one mixed) and the remaining three composed of sex workers. Both the interviews and the focus groups were held in community centers or organizations conveniently accessible to the participants.

Samples of food, hygiene products, and condoms were issued to all participants, and sex workers received \$20 in recompense for attending the interviews and group activities.

## Results

### *Elderly Males*

The age range of the elderly male was sixty to ninety-three years, 37 percent being between sixty to seventy years, 35 percent between seventy-one to eighty years, 28 percent between eighty-one and ninety-three. Marital status

enquiries revealed that 35 percent were married or living with a person and 65 percent were single, widowed, divorced, or separated. The majority reported a monthly income of \$600 or less and cited Social Security and food stamps as their main source of income.

When asked about with whom they had sexual relations, 93 percent said women, 5 percent said other men, and 2 percent reported both. Seventy-two percent reported being very satisfied with their sexual relationships. Of the total, 68 percent referred to their spouse or girlfriend as their sexual partner, the remainder indicated sex workers, drug users, and casual partners whom they met in public places.

Thirty-nine percent reported having paid for or given drugs or gifts in exchange for sexual services during their lifetime and, of these, 50 percent reported having had sexual relations during the previous year. Of those who paid for sexual services during the previous year, 63 percent reported having had relations with a sex worker during the preceding month.

When asked about frequency of sexual relations, 61 percent of those who employed the services of sex workers reported a frequency of one or more instances per week.

When questioned about when they would seek sexual services, 34 percent stated that they would do so on any day, while 24 percent did so at the beginning of the month ("social security syndrome").

When asked why they paid for sexual favors, 47 percent indicated pleasure, 16 percent sexual necessity, and 11 percent the desire for a woman without having an established sexual partner.

It was revealed that the main point of contact between elderly males and sex workers was the street, but full details are given in table 1.

**Table 1: Contact Points between Elderly Males and Sex Workers**

Location	Percentage
Street	26
Brothel	18
Sex worker's residence	16
Bars	16
Client's residence	8
Hotels	5
Others	11

The majority (84 percent) paid for services in cash, but other items, such as clothes, drugs, and food were also exchanged for sexual favors. Prices paid ranged from \$6 to \$30.

Among the sexual practices most frequently requested by this group were penis-vagina penetration (66 percent), oral sex (18 percent), and sexual play



(8 percent). Fifty-eight percent reported never using condoms while only 21 percent used them on all occasions when having sexual relations with sex workers.

Attitude and behavior regarding preventive measures to avoid HIV infection was also examined in an HIV Prevention Need Assessment Study conducted by the Puerto Rico Department of Health in 1996. When asked about penis-vagina sexual relationships occurring during the preceding six months, 87.5 percent of men over sixty years of age reported engaging in them without the use of a condom.

Among all the different age groups interviewed in that study, the elderly males were the most reluctant to use condoms "because it diminishes sexual pleasure" (173).

### *Sex Workers*

The sociodemographic data of this group is presented in table 2. The age range varies from eighteen to forty-eight years, with 42 percent falling in the thirty-one- to forty-one-years-old bracket. Only 20 percent of the group were married or living with a person, 16 percent were separated, and the remainder were single, widowed or divorced. One-third (30 percent) had completed high school and 21 percent had undertaken university studies to undergraduate or graduate level. Seventy-four percent of the group had children, and although overall these ranged in number from one to ten children, 55 percent reported having only two or three.

The majority (96 percent) indicated sex work as their main source of income, while 4 percent reported being the owner of a "shooting gallery" or drug point. Other sources of income were food stamps, family, church, and alimony. When asked about monthly income, 56 percent reported receiving between \$200 and \$800 (see table 3).

Questions regarding the number of clients entertained per day understandably revealed the difference between "the good days and the bad days." A "good" day would provide between one and twenty clients, although 49 percent cited one to five as the norm. "Bad" days were variously defined as having zero to thirteen clients, with 45 percent quoting figures between zero and two. It was also revealed that clients in general favored the weekends for seeking sexual services (76 percent), whereas elderly males tended to do so on the days on which they received their Social Security checks.

Analysis was then made regarding the difference in practice when the sex workers had sexual relations with their partners as compared to similar instances with their clients. These data include their perceived degree of success in persuading the male to use a condom, actual condom use, source of condom supply, and degree of sexual satisfaction attained.

**Table 2: Sociodemographic Characteristics of Sex Workers**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Age (years)</b>	
18-20	11
21-30	35
31-40	42
41-48	12
<b>Marital Status</b>	
Married/Consensual union	20
Separated	16
Single	31
Divorced	22
Widow	12
<b>Education</b>	
Elementary	14
Junior high	33
High school	30
University	16
Graduate	5
Never in school	2
<b>Children</b>	
Yes	74
No	26
<b>Number of Children</b>	
One	12
Two	33
Three	22
Four	14
Five	7
Six	3
Seven	3
Eight	3
Ten	3

Table 3: Monthly Income of Sex Workers

Income	Percent
\$60	2
\$200-\$400	21
\$500-\$800	35
\$1,000-\$1,500	20
\$2,000-\$2,400	16
\$2,500-\$2,800	4
\$5,000	2

Table 4 reveals that in cases where the sex worker was always the one to decide condom use, they insisted on doing so in 75 percent of instances with clients but in only 20 percent of instances with their partners.

Table 4: Who Initiates Sexual Relations and Decides Type of Practices and Condom Use

	Who initiates sexual relations?	Who decides sexual practice?	Who decides condom use?	% General Client
	% Partner	% Partner	% Partner	
Male always	28	15	2	4
Male mostly	7	6	2	3
Both	49	64	33	9
Female mostly	7	6	2	9
Female always	2	7	20	75
Nobody talks	7	2	41	-

When studying the use of the condom in vaginal relations (see table 5), we find that 51 percent never used it with their partners, whereas 87 percent always used it with clients in general, and in 76 percent of instances with elderly clients. Only 11 percent reported never using them with this latter group.

Table 5: Reported Condom Use in Penis-Vagina Relations

	% Partner	% General Client	% Elderly Client*
Always	39	87	76
Mostly	2	7	7
Sometimes	8	-	4
Almost never	-	-	2
Never	51	6	11

\*Refers to condom use in general sexual relations, not specifically penis-vaginal.

Enquiries about who obtained the condoms and from where again revealed differences between partners and clients. Where the female was always the condom provider, she actually did so in 81 percent of instances with clients, but in only 34 percent of instances with her partner (table 6). The pharmacy was the preferred source for obtaining condoms for 39 percent of sex workers and 91 percent of elderly males (table 7).

**Table 6: Who Obtains the Condoms**

	%	
	Partner	Client
Male always	6	4
Both	18	16
Female always	34	80
Condom not used	42	-

**Table 7: Sources of Condom Supply**

Sources	%	
	Sex Workers	Elderly Males
Pharmacy	39	91
Kamaria (community-based organization)	19	-
Health clinic	7	6
Gasoline station	5	-
Food store	4	-
Physician	2	-
Other (friends, clients, etc.)	24	3

Table 8 reveals the sex workers' perception of their degree of success in attaining an acceptable level of condom use by both their partners and their clients.

**Table 8: Perception of Degree of Success in Persuading Partner/Client to Use a Condom**

	%	
	Partner	General Client
High	58	75
Satisfactory	7	9
Average	11	12
Little	4	4
None	20	-

The next aspect to be considered was the degree of sexual satisfaction enjoyed by the sex workers themselves and, as table 9 indicates, there were

again differences between partner and client relationships. Seventy-six percent of sex workers reported being satisfied or very satisfied by their partners but only 30 percent obtained such a level of satisfaction with clients in general, this falling to 29 percent in case of elderly clients. The small difference between general and elderly clients is worthy of note.

Table 9: Satisfaction Achieved in Sexual Relations

	With Partner	With General Client	With Elderly Client
	%	%	%
Very satisfied	36	12	7
Satisfied	40	18	22
Average	19	32	32
Unsatisfied	3	18	17
Very unsatisfied	2	20	22

When asked about the sexual capabilities of their elderly clients, 74 percent confirmed finding adequate sexual function, while 26 percent had experienced problems due to failure to achieve or maintain an erection.

In the focus groups, most sex workers expressed a preference for elderly as opposed to younger males due to the way in which the former treated them, i.e., by showing more kindness, respect, and consideration, and having less expectations. One interviewee stated that "when they see you in the street, they ask you if you have eaten, and they invite you to dinner or give you money, even if they don't do anything." Another advantage was "That they pay well for sexual services." Further quotes included, "They are more free with money"; "They pay more and are not mean"; "They are better off economically and if they don't have the cash, they go and get it." It was further stated that this older age group was cleaner and more careful with their health than younger clients. Also, they were much easier to please and "We have to do less work because they are easier to ejaculate."

The disadvantages of serving this elderly group were that they tended to talk and touch too much, "Like it was a loaf of bread. They love to touch here and there." It was also pointed out that on occasion, they became sexually excited but had difficulty in ejaculating, "becoming aggressive sometimes."

Among the sexual services most sought, masturbation was prominent 92 percent, followed by seeing the sex worker naked (89 percent), oral sex (75 percent), vaginal sex (74 percent), dancing for them (28 percent), and anal sex (21 percent). Other practices mentioned in the focus group were masochism (hitting or being hit), fetishism (use of stockings and clothes), touching or introducing the finger into the male anus, and participating in fantasies.

When asked in the focus groups why they thought these men solicited their sexual services, the women gave as the principal reason the lack of a

sexual partner in the case of single men and widowers. In the case of married clients, the causes included refusal of the wife to have sex, loss of interest or desire on the part of the wife after giving birth, a change of routine, or reluctance on the part of the man to ask his wife to indulge in certain practices. One of the participants stated that "Even though they have an active sexual appetite, they respect the woman and dare not ask her to do things." In other cases, the wife was unable to provide satisfaction due to illness or incapacity, and as another participant put it, "Some elderly men say that the menopause makes women dry and they cannot have relations." When asked where they met their elderly clients, 93 percent said on the street and 7 percent by visiting the men's homes.

## Discussion

In the light of these investigations, we must eliminate the belief that elderly males are not active or interested in sexual activity. For those who do not have a regular sex partner, sex workers provide one of the opportunities to indulge in sexual activities and practices. For this reason, it is important that both groups identify sexual risk behaviors—for example lack of condom use—and be encouraged to use preventive measures when having sexual relations.

Designing and providing preventive intervention measures are important for both groups. Some aspects that may be included are education about condom accessibility (money is an important aspect in both groups and buying condoms in the pharmacy can be costly), sexually transmitted disease evaluation (information and testing for all such diseases, not only HIV), family planning, and rehabilitation programs for drug users.

A comprehensive approach must be employed when designing and developing human services for these groups, and guidance regarding living arrangements, employment, food, and medication should be integrated with the other services provided. In Puerto Rico, cultural values and norms ascribed to condom use by the males is one of the main barriers to the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. Health and behavior professionals should take into consideration these aspects when designing intervention strategy both with the elderly population and with sex workers.

This study revealed that elderly clients established a more regular and personal relationship with sex workers than other clients in general. It must be recognized that these sex workers are possibly the only people who validate their elderly clients as sexual beings, and this may help them to feel more receptive and free to discuss safer sexual alternatives, such as condom use and other nonpenetrative practices. Sex workers can become a possible resource to provide clients and their peers with health promotion and edu-

cation. We should remember that as in any other service, the better educated the client and provider, the better and more satisfying the experience for both parties. This reasoning should be used to encourage a more pro-active approach by sex workers in the education of their clients.

## References

- Alexander, E. A., and A. L. Allison. 1995. Sexuality in older adults. In *Care of the Elderly: Clinical Aspects of Aging*, edited by W. Reichel. Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 1996. HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Atlanta, Georgia. December: 8 (2).
- Masters, W. H., V. E. Johnson, and R. C. Kolodny. 1992. *Human Sexuality*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Puerto Rico Department of Health. 1997. HIV/AIDS Reporting System. Puerto Rico AIDS Surveillance Report, 28 August.
- . 1996. HIV Prevention Needs Assessment Puerto Rico, 1996. Complete Report. Puerto Rico Department of Health and Puerto Rico's Community Planning Group.
- Whipple, B., and K. W. Saura. 1995. The overlooked epidemic: HIV in older adults. *American Journal of Nursing* 96 (2): 23–28.

## BEING A JOHN

HUGH GENE LOEBNER

### Being a John Is Being Normal

I pay for sex because that is the only way I can get sex. I am not ashamed of paying for sex. I pay for food. I pay for clothing. I pay for shelter. Why should I not also pay for sex? Paying for sex does not diminish the pleasure I derive from it. I am proud that I can afford to pay for as much sex as I need. Indeed, I sometimes pay more than asked or expected.

I have ongoing relationships with two wonderful women. One I have been seeing for over two years, and the other for almost a year. My relationships with them are boringly mundane. In addition to engaging in sex, we frequently go out for dinner and engage in a variety of social activities. I consider them girlfriends, but I know that the only reason they have sex with me is because I pay them, and from time to time I pay for "one-night stands."

My paying for sex is nothing new. Prostitution is the oldest profession. Indeed, prostitution is observed in chimpanzees. A significant part of a chimp's diet is monkey meat. Let me quote an excerpt from the *New York Times*, June 27, 1995. It regards chimpanzees, monkey hunting, and chimpanzee sex workers:

As early as the 1960s, Dr. Geza Teleki, an American primatologist, said after observing male chimpanzees swap meat for sex with females that nutrition was only one of several reasons chimpanzees ate flesh.

Dr. Stanford builds on this finding, saying that male chimpanzees often hunt as a way to finance their sexual barter when traveling with sexually receptive females. And the more such receptive females are present, the more likely a group of chimpanzees will hunt.



Time after time, Dr. Stanford documented how male chimpanzees dangle a dead red colobus monkey in front of a sexually swollen female, sharing only after first mating. He said that human sexual relationships could have been just as material-based.

"When chimps arrive at a tree holding meat on the hoof, the male chimps seem to have an awareness that, 'Well if I get meat I will maybe get more copulations because the females will come running over once I get a carcass,'" Dr. Stanford said.

Female chimpanzees are sexually promiscuous, with or without meat, copulating with more than a dozen males each day. But Dr. Stanford believes the attraction of flesh, consumption of which is shown by Dr. McGrew to be linked to the survival of offspring, could give lower-ranking males a better chance at matings; or that it could be "the difference between getting lots of sex and getting lots and lots of sex."

I'm nothing but a successful chimpanzee with three hundred pieces of monkey meat.

## Being Out of the Closet

I am a self-admitted client of prostitutes. I proclaim this without shame or fear.

### *Why I Came Out of the Closet*

I sponsor the Loebner Prize, a contest in computer artificial intelligence. It is a Turing test, named after Alan Turing, the brilliant English mathematician who laid the foundations of computing theory. In 1950 he described a test for computer intelligence which now bears his name. In 1952 Alan Turing was arrested for homosexual behavior. In 1954 he committed suicide, presumably out of despair at the oppression against gays and his mistaken belief that it would be impossible to end that oppression. Thus, the life of one of our greatest geniuses, a man who was instrumental in winning World War II with his work in deciphering the German Enigma machine, the device that encoded the most secret Nazi war communications, was lost to sexual oppression.

When Rudolph Giuliani became mayor of New York, he instituted a crackdown on prostitutes and johns as part of a so-called quality of life program. Whose quality of life, I wonder? I live in New York City. My knowledge of Turing's martyrdom because of oppression of his sexual preferences gave me the courage to make public, in a letter published in the *New York Times*, my anger based on oppression of my sexual behavior—consorting with sex workers. I have never regretted my decision to write that letter.

## What Are the Consequences of My Candor?

### *Benefits*

One benefit of my candor has been the opportunity to appear on television and radio and in print. I have been on *20/20*, *Oprah*, *Geraldo*, *Maury Povich*, *Susan Powter*, *Charlie Perez*, *The O'Reilly Report*, the *Cochrane and Grace Show* on Court TV, and others whose names I cannot remember. I have been written up in *New York Newsday*, *Time Out New York*, *The Village Voice*, and the *Insider*. Others may not consider these as benefits, but you must remember that my telephone number is 1-500-EGO-TRIP.

A second benefit is an absolute lack of fear of arrest. This is not courage. It is that I cannot be shamed by an arrest.

### *Penalties*

One penalty for my candor is a certain reluctance of one of my sex worker friends to be seen with me in some social settings. Had I remained in the closet, the nature of our relationship would have been ambiguous, and she would be more willing to be seen with me in those settings.

Another potential downside is the possible impact of my notoriety on the Loebner Prize.

## What Are the Ethical Considerations of Paying for Sex?

### *Prostitution Is Not "Exploitive"*

Prostitution is no more exploitive than any other occupation. I pay sex workers more for a one-hour session than I pay the men I employ in my business for a week's work. *Who* is being exploited?

One of the sex workers I see has a boyfriend with whom she has sex for free. I have the same physical desires that her boyfriend has, yet I must pay. *Who* is being exploited?

### *Prostitution Is Not "Degrading"*

According to the *American Heritage Dictionary*, to degrade is (1) to reduce in grade, rank, or status; demote; or (2) to lower in dignity; dishonor or dis-

grace. Degradation is entirely a mental construct. If people consider prostitution as degrading then it is degrading, but *only* because it is defined to be so. There is nothing intrinsically degrading about prostitution.

Consider the prostitute. She (or he) is an object of sexual desire. The fact that her or his client is willing to pay money in exchange for sex is objective, quantifiable evidence of that sex appeal. Among the shortcomings of my existence is the fact that I am no longer an object of sexual desire for those whom I desire. I was never as sexually attractive as I would have wished.

Let us examine the notion that prostitution is "evil because it is the result of childhood sexual abuse." Some opponents of prostitution label it as evil because (they claim) people become prostitutes as a result of childhood sexual abuse. I do not think this is the case. But even if it were true, it would still be logical nonsense. The fact that an evil produces a consequence does not imply that the consequence is evil.

Consider wheelchair basketball games for paralyzed Vietnam war veterans. We all agree that having one's spinal cord destroyed in the Vietnam war is evil. The reason that paralyzed Vietnam veterans play wheelchair basketball is because they were paralyzed in Vietnam. That does not make wheelchair basketball evil.

## Being a John Means Being in Hell

We are oppressed, we sex workers, sex clients, and facilitators of commercial sex. We are arrested, fined, imprisoned; our cars and buildings are confiscated; our names and reputations are besmirched; we are outcasts and pariahs. Consider Robin Marie Head, currently in a Texas prison for the offense of "engaging in organized criminal activity." Her *criminal act* (as stated in the indictment) was that:

on or about between the dates of June 15, 1992, and September 15, 1993, [she] did then and there unlawfully, with the intent to establish, maintain, and participate in a combination or in the profits of a combination consisting of three or more persons, did then and there knowingly own, control, supervise and manage a prostitution enterprise that used at least two prostitutes.

This is the relevant excerpt from the transcript of her sentencing:

THE COURT: Robin Marie Head, on your plea of guilty and the evidence introduced herein, the Court finds you guilty of the offense of Engaging in Organized Criminal Activity and assesses your punishment at 10 years confinement in the Texas Department of Corrections. Do you have anything to say before sentence of the law is pronounced against you?

THE DEFENDANT: No, sir.

THE COURT: Having nothing to say, it is the order of the Court that you, Robin Marie Head, who has been adjudged guilty of the offense of Engaging in Organized Criminal Activity, and whose punishment has been assessed at 10 years confinement in the Texas Department of Corrections, be delivered by the Sheriff of Harris County, Texas, to the Director of the Texas Department of Corrections or anyone else legally authorized to accept such convicts, where you shall be confined for a period of 10 years, in accordance with the laws governing the Texas Department of Corrections.

That sentence, that injustice, that monstrous judicial malignancy was pronounced by Judge Michael T. McSpadden.

## Being a John Means Being a Social Activist

Gays and lesbians were once victims of oppression. They, too, suffered opprobrium for engaging, with other consenting adults, in sexual conduct that was declared "deviant." However, by standing up for their rights, by rioting at the Stonewall, by speaking, nay shouting out, they earned their freedom.

Now it is our turn.

We millions (for we are indeed millions) must show the world that we *shall* have our freedom. We must become visible.

The Manifesto of Sexual Freedom proclaims June 9 as End Sexual Oppression Day. It calls for all those who agree with the principles of the manifesto to demonstrate at noon in front of city halls across the nation.

Last year, on June 9, 1996, the first demonstrations were held. They will be held again this year and every year until we are free. I call upon you at this conference to join those of us who demonstrated last year in this year's demonstrations. The price is but one hour of your time. That hour is down payment on your freedom and freedom for those like Robin Head who are rotting in jail.

We *must* demonstrate. How can I motivate you? I have no carrot with which to entice you but our freedom. I carry no stick with which to compel you but our oppression. *Our* freedom is up to us.