

Women who buy sex in Australia: From social representations to lived experiences

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Publication Date:

2018

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.26190/unsworks/20644>

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Women who buy sex in Australia: From social representations to lived experiences

Hilary J. Caldwell

A thesis in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy



Centre of Social Research in Health
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

July 2018

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES
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School: Centre for Research in Social Health

Faculty: Arts and Social Sciences

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From social representations to lived experiences

Women who buy sex in Australia: From social representations to lived experiences

The idea of women buying sex has the potential to disrupt and challenge highly gendered debate about the sex industry and social narrative about female sexual agency. Until now there is very little empirical evidence of women buying sex outside the field of female sex tourism. This thesis aims to address empirical shortfalls regarding women buying sex, explore heteronormative roles of gender and sexuality, and to inform and challenge theoretical perspectives about power in a postfeminist era.

Social discourse about women who buy sex were examined in a textual analysis of a media portrayal of possible female sex tourism, related intertexts, and associated comments from an online audience. The results reveal that people have broad and often polarized opinions about female agency to buy sex, gendered double standards regarding expected behaviour, and commercial sex as being exploitative.

Experiential data was obtained through Skype interviews with 17 sex workers, and the results of thematic analysis provide a thorough description of the market for women buying sex in Australia. Sex workers said their female clients were diverse and unlike stereotypical representations. Sex workers thought that female clients possibly bought sex from female providers more often than male and they considered the female market to be growing. Interpretative phenomenological analysis of data collected from Skype interviews with 21 women who had bought sex supported sex workers' assessment of diversity in clients. The women had various motivations to buy sex from seeking therapy to fun. They said they generally felt empowered however, they feared stigma and criminalisation.

Australian based research on the sex industry is internationally important because the sex industry is at present, largely legalised/decriminalised, meaning participant and researcher efforts are not skewed to clandestine or illegal activities. The importance of exploring women buying sex extends beyond academic debate about female sexuality and into socio-political spheres. Thus far, a lack of scholarly research about women buying sex contributes to maintaining their erasure or misrepresentation in debate. This thesis provides the first empirical evidence of women buying sex in Australia.

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Acknowledgements

Any acknowledgement must begin with recognition of my privilege. I acknowledge my white middle class educated Australian wealth made possible my ambition and realisation of this PhD project. This is not to say that I did not suffer crisis of identity, finances, or confidence throughout my candidature or that I found my intellectual and emotional growth to be easy. It is to say, that I know some of the people interviewed for this project do not have the same privilege. My determination to continue through tough times was renewed with the slightest thought of the trust invested in me by those I interviewed. This project is about them and I hope it speaks for them.

The successful recruitment of participants was entirely due to the support of sex workers and, Scarlet Alliance and SWOP (NSW), who also gave advice about methods. In support of sex workers and to demonstrate my gratitude, a donation has been made to Scarlet Alliance.

Academics who have been especially supportive include Loren Brener, Kath Albury, and Philippe Adam, who served as secondary supervisors. Christy Newman and Carla Treloar gave advice during performance reviews and Alan McKee was extremely helpful to assist with technicalities of Textual Analysis. Important insights were gained by speaking with Barbara Sullivan and Victor Minichiello. Ray McNeil did the photography used in advertising. UNSW librarians assisted with database searchers and academic writing support – namely, Claire Aitchison, Sue Starfield, Linda Devereux, Maya Gunawardena, and Maria Schroder. External academic support was informally given by Tara Brabazon from Flinders University, Inger Mewburn the Thesis Whisperer and supervisor of a wonderful MOOC – surviving your PhD. Various Facebook groups have also been invaluable such as sex worker research groups and PhD OWLs (Older Wiser Learners). I am grateful for the work of proof readers throughout the candidature, who were Alix Matti and Amanda Piper. Proof reading was for spelling, grammar and style only. An editor has not been employed in the construction of this thesis.

My friends and family and specifically my running friends, Mike, Mira and Neil, have endured endless circular debate as I verbalised every piece of this thesis puzzle. Their tenacity to keep up the encouragement and the appearance of listening has kept me running and writing and I am extremely grateful to them. I suspect they all expect me to emerge from a scientific laboratory sometime soon, hunch-backed, with my lab coat covered in soot and wild Einstein hair, offering an outstretched smokin' thesis.

Mostly I would like to credit Super John – Professor John de Wit, who mentored and guided me. I can't express my gratitude. He believed in me.

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Relevant Publications and Presentations Arising from this Thesis

Book Chapters

Caldwell, H., de Wit, J. (Manuscript submitted for publication). The characteristics and motivations of women who buy sex in Australia. In S. Dewey (Eds). *Handbook of sex industry research*. Routledge.

Caldwell, H., de Wit, J. (Manuscript submitted for publication). Criminalise women buying sex? Neo-abolitionist influence on Australian politics and media consumers. In Z. Davy., A.C. Santos., C. Bertone., R. Thoreson., & S. Wieringa (Eds). *Handbook of global sexualities*. Sage

Journal Articles

Caldwell, H., de Wit, J. (paper in review). Women's experiences buying sex in Australia. *Sexualities (Special Ed. Female Clients of Commercial Sex)*.

Oral Presentations

Caldwell, H., de Wit, J. (2017 November). Flipping gendered power in commercial sex: When women buy sex in Australia. Australasian 2017 Sexual Health Conference, Canberra.

Caldwell, H., de Wit, J. (2017, July). Women buying sex in Australia: Gendered expectations and stigma. XI IASSCS Conference: Breaking boundaries, Bangkok.

Caldwell, H., de Wit, J. (2017, May). From physical sex therapy to entertainment: the motivations of women buying sex in Australia. 23rd Congress of the World Association for Sexual Health, Prague.

Caldwell, H., de Wit, J. (2016, November). Women buying sex in Australia prompt rethink of gendered sex industry narratives. Australian Sexual health Conference (ASHM), Adelaide.

Caldwell, H., de Wit, J. (2016, April). Sex Workers describe the market of female clients in Australia. HHARD Conference CRSH Margins and Belonging, Sydney.

Caldwell, H. (2016, March) Women who buy sex, 1 hour presentation. Society of Australian Sexologists, ACT Branch, Canberra.

Caldwell, H., de Wit, J. (2015, July) Australian attitudes about heterosexual power relations when women participate in sex tourism. 22nd Congress of the World Association for Sexual Health, Singapore.

Caldwell, H., de Wit, J. (2015, April). Sex workers speak about their female clients. Oral presentation at 2nd UNSW Pg Research Symposium, Sydney.

Caldwell, H., de Wit, J., Adam, P., Albury, K. (2014, October). Representations of women who buy sex: A call for scholarly research. Paper presented at Asia-Oceania Federation of Sexology Conference, Brisbane.

Caldwell, H., de Wit, J., Adam, P., Albury, K. (2014, August). A cultural double standard: Public responses to female sex tourism. Paper presented at the Inaugural Postgraduate Research Symposium, Sydney.

Caldwell, H., de Wit, J., Adam, P., Albury, K. (2014, February). Rhonda: the face of female sex tourism for Australia? Abstract accepted for 13th Centre for Social Research in Health conference on HIV, viral hepatitis and related diseases. Promises and limitations, Sydney.

Caldwell, H., de Wit, J., Adam, P., Albury, K. (2013, November). Women buying sex: plenty of social discourses, little empirical data... Paper presented at UNSW Arts & Social Sciences – Postgraduate Conference 2013; Sydney.

Caldwell, H., de Wit, J., Adam, P., Albury, K. (2013, August). Women buying sex – Where is the evidence? Paper presented at the International Association for the Study of Sexuality, Culture and Society Conference 2013, Argentina.

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Abbreviations and Symbols

AAMI	Australian Associated Motor Insurers Limited		MBody	Male bodyworker
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation		MSW	Male sex worker
ACT	Australian Capital Territory		Natsal	United Kingdom National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles
ASHA	Australian Sexual Health Alliance		NonGID	Non-gender identified
ASHR	Australian Longitudinal Study of Health and Relationships		NSW	New South Wales
BDSM	Bondage, discipline or domination, sadism or submission, masochism		QLD	Queensland
CATWA	Coalition Against Trafficking of Women Australia		SA	South Australia
CSA	Childhood sexual abuse		SSA	Same sex attracted
FMas	Female masseur		STI	Sexually transmitted infection
FSW	Female sex worker		SWOP	Sex Workers Outreach Project
HREC	Human Research Ethics Committee		UNSW	University of New South Wales
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis		VIC	Victoria
IPV	Intimate partner violence		WA	Western Australia

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The idea of women buying sex is improbable for most people, steering media to portray these women in sensationalised documentary (RedNightCity, 2012), or as humorous fictional characters (Lipkin & Burson, 2009; M. Rose, 2011). Media titillation about women buying sex signifies their existence and any informal Google search of “male escorts for women in Australia” will yield several million results including apparently genuine advertising of male and female sexual service providers targeting female clients. These informal investigations remain only marginally influential due to a lack of Australian empirical evidence and convictions about extremely low prevalence or importance of women buying sex. This bias limits female sexuality in academic debate to gendered assumptions, and unproductive theoretical discussion where women buying sex are perceived on a pendulum swing between sexually empowered women or detrimental to a moral society, if they exist at all (Attwood, 2007; Lumby, 1997). We need to know far more about women buying sex in Australia, their attitudes, practises and how they are positioned in contemporary social discourse.

The importance of women buying sex extends beyond their own expression of female sexuality and into socio-political and academic debate. Thus far, a lack of academic evidence about women buying sex contributes to their erasure or misrepresentation in scholarly debate. Research projects about all genders of sex workers and their clients are needed to de-gender industry rhetoric which often promotes a narrow perception of clients as male and sex workers as female. A focus of research on male clients has become politically important due to criminalisation models of regulation and government policies in various countries (Brooks-Gordon, 2010; Monto, 2004; Phipps, 2017; Sanders, 2007; Vanwesenbeeck, 2017; Weitzer, 2009b). Much of the contemporary narrative about male clients in criminalisation debates are

grounded on speculative victimisation of female sex workers, although the concept of sex worker victimisation continues to be contested. Weitzer (2015) specifically and Vanwesenbeeck (2009) more generally, argue that gender studies within the sex industry are important to distinguish what is universal in sex work and what is gendered to inform public policy. Indeed, Scott and Minichiello (2014), while researching male sex workers, found anecdotal evidence of a similar (and growing) demand for male sexual services among women. They indicate they have heard testimony from female clients which suggests that their reasons for buying sex are similar to those of their male counterparts and consider that the research gap indicates an urgent need for research on issues relevant to the women who buy sex (Scott & Minichiello, 2014). Several other researchers have also indicated a need for research on issues relevant to the population of women buying sex (Aggleton & Parker, 2015; Brooks-Gordon, 2010; Taylor, 2006; Weitzer, 2000).

The aim of this thesis is to open discussion regarding women as clients of sex workers in Australia, providing the first empirical evidence about them. To do so, I draw on theorists and theories of post structuralism and post feminism including queer theory. Queer theory, introduced in 1990, was founded on post-structuralist theory and the work of Foucault, directs a critical reading of gender to disrupt and destabilise fixed notions (Butler, 1999; Gill, 2007a). Thus, queer theory challenges essentialist notions of gender controlling sexuality, and is ideal for exploring the forces that push and pull women to buy sex. In this way, this thesis will examine the concepts of gender, sexuality and power when women buy sex.

Why is this Research Gap a Problem?

The problem of an absence of empirical evidence of women buying sex in Australia is not simply an example of an insignificant number of extraordinary women challenging dominant cultural norms without voice in debate. The major problem with gendered research imbalance is that it has produced a problematisation of commercial sex *as* a gendered power

imbalance, driving political debate contributing to policy and law formation (Vanwesenbeeck, 2009; Weitzer, 2015). Concerns about male power to command female bodies in commercial sex have led to increasing studies about male clients (Wilcox, Christmann, Rogerson, & Birch, 2008). Male sex clients are predominantly described as not significantly different from men who do not buy sex, psychologically (Grenz, 2005), in personality characteristics (Pitts, Smith, Grierson, O'Brien, & Misson, 2004; Xantidis & McCabe, 2000) or demographically (Perkins, 1999). However, dominant discourse in state politics and the media commonly portray clients of sex workers as men who are perverted, immoral or violent (Sanders, 2007; Sullivan, 1997; Weitzer, 2000; Weitzer, 2009b). These discourses are largely supported by gender, moral or religious arguments. In addition, women who sell sex, their motivations and outcomes, continue to attract research attention in disciplines such as sociology (Agustin, 2007), psychology (Rio, 1991), epidemiology (Rissel, Richters, Grulich, Visser, & Smith, 2005; Swe & Rashid, 2013), law (Weitzer, 2009b), politics (Duggan, 1995; Sullivan, 1997) and human rights (Armstrong, 2009). The sex industry remains one of the few industries where providers attract more research attention than consumers, and consumer needs and desires are overlooked as unimportant or overemphasised as immoral.

Ideological Framework

There is a dichotomy in researcher ideology in sex industry based research to be either prohibitionist or liberalist, states Weitzer (2000) who asks researchers to explicitly state their ideology. The conceptual framework and ideology for this study considers; sex work as work, clients of sex workers as predominantly non-violent adults who pay for sex with consenting adults, and women have agency to negotiate their sexual experiences. This polymorphous paradigm does not reduce sex work to exploitation or empowerment and encourages sensitivity to a diversity of types of sex work and power differentials (Weitzer 2009a). This is

further signified by using terminology such as *sex work* instead of *prostitution*. Thus, this study is not about trafficking, violence, mental illness, drug use, sexually transmitted infections or any other issue commonly conflated with the sex industry.

Adopting post-structuralist and post-feminist ontologies and epistemologies to the study of women buying sex, means acknowledging that sex is bought and sold in Australian capitalist and patriarchal society. The organisation of society and the sex industry contribute to the experiences of women buying sex. The most influential factor defining their experiences may be the construction of their female gender. The application of queer theory, a de-gendering theory by definition, regards female identifying clients of sex workers without gender role assumptions. In addition, I aim to examine the views of contemporary society and sex workers about women buying sex before considering the lived experiences of women who buy sex. A queer theoretical lens, used during data analysis, aims to remove any remaining gendered assumptions. While de-gendering the sex industry is a long term goal, this project and future projects about women buying sex are needed to first redress academic imbalance.

Why is There a Research Gap?

One of the reasons why women who buy sex have not yet come to the attention of researchers may be, as Scott and Minichiello (2014) suggest, because women buying sex do not fit with traditional views about female sexuality and because of this it generally has been perceived as not very common or problematic. Three further reasons why academia has not been interested are based on more practical issues such as a lack of funding for research which has no obvious population health benefits (e.g. HIV research) (Bernstein, 2010a), a reluctance to engage with stigmatized subject matter (Irvine, 2015), and snippets of evidence of very low prevalence of women buying sex in studies with other foci.

Attempts to estimate the size of the women buying sex population in Australia have generally found very small numbers. The Australian longitudinal study of health and relationships (ASHR1 surveyed 9134 women and ASHR2 surveyed 10038 women) found that very few women reported they had ever paid for sex, 0.1% in 2004/2005 and 0.3% in 2012/2013 (Richters et al., 2014; Rissel et al., 2005). There are psychological, sociological and methodological reasons why so few women may report buying sex which I discuss in more depth in the next chapter. The actual prevalence of women buying sex is likely to remain unknown due to methodological difficulties in gaining honest statistics and vague definitions and interpretations of what constitutes commercial sex (Harcourt & Donovan, 2005; Weitzer, 2015). We need to know first, about the characteristics of women who buy sex, their motivations and how they embody their experiences. Through the provision of information from multi-layered analysis, this thesis asks about the social climate in which women buy sex, characterises the market and practices of women buying sex, and examines women's experiences of buying sex.

Research Design and Thesis Structure

This project aims to explore the phenomenon of women buying sex in Australia. In doing so, I provide the first empirical evidence of women buying sex in Australia and form a baseline from which further research can be conceptualised. The project investigates the phenomenon by assessing what people say about women buying sex, what sex workers say, and then specifically asks women about their experiences buying sex. It is a qualitative study using the following three techniques:

- A textual analysis of media based on an advertisement campaign, intertexts and analysis of audience engagement with the media regarding female sex tourism.
- A thematic analysis of data collected through in-depth interviews with key informants who are predominately sex workers speaking about their female clients.

- A phenomenological analysis of data collected through in-depth interviews with women who have experience buying sex.

Specifically, I aim to address empirical shortfalls, such as which women buy sex, in what circumstances, how and why, and to inform and challenge theoretical perspectives such as heteronormative female roles regarding gender, sexuality and power in a postfeminist era.

Research Questions

1. What do discourses regarding women buying sex tell us about contemporary views of female sexuality and the sex industry?
2. How do people more acquainted with the idea of women buying sex perceive and understand the phenomenon?
3. How do women who buy sex represent themselves in terms of their characteristics, attitudes, motivations and situations, and how do they describe their experiences and negotiate social discourse?

Each of these questions are examined through separate data collections, analysis and results, and are presented in separate chapters.

This thesis, in chapter 2, presents background information about how different surveys have approached the topic of women buying sex and why findings of low prevalence may not reflect actual activity. Prevalence findings are contrasted with a discussion about the visibility of women buying sex in media. The representations of women buying sex in media expose the prominence of concepts of gender, sexuality and power, and this thesis ponders the relationships between the concepts and what they mean when women buy sex. A thorough understanding of how these concepts are constructed by society, by sex workers and by sex clients form background to the structures controlling female sexual function and activity.

Chapter three examines some research regarding female sex tourism, which provides evidence of women buying sex abroad, their attitudes and behaviours. Debate about female sex tourists often posit holiday enthusiasm as an explanation for irregular female behaviour; an explanation that does not apply when women buy sex at home. Further differences between female sex tourism and women buying sex in their home country's, include considerations for racial and economic inequalities. These inequalities divert power discussions about women buying sex away from gendered discussion, often excusing these women as abnormal.

The theoretical considerations and study methods for the social analysis are clearly set out in Chapter four. The methods used for the qualitative interviews of sex workers and sex clients are included in Chapter six to allow for the results of social analysis to be presented first in Chapter five. This is not intended to divide the project into discordant sections but to keep results of each section closer to the corresponding method for reader clarity.

The social analysis is a textual analysis of media and uses an advertisement for car insurance in which the main characters hinted at a possible commercial sex tourism arrangement as a basis to start analysis. Intertexts about the possible sex tourism were examined including an online article to which the audience responded with online comments. In this way, audience interpretations of media about women buying sex revealed some of the discourse in contemporary society. The results of social analysis are presented in Chapter five and suggest the social settings which women buying sex navigate. The results reveal that people have broad and often polarized opinions about commercial sex and female sexuality and double standards exist for the expected behaviour of men or women. Although not surprising to a researcher with lived experience of Australian culture, the systematic unpacking of social attitudes provides greater understanding of underlying influences such as morality and human rights on social attitudes.

The next chapter in the thesis sets out the qualitative methods used to collect data from sex workers and from women who have bought sex. Additionally, Chapter six examines the various methods of data analysis available and justifies the use of thematic analysis from sex worker data and interpretative phenomenological analysis for the data regarding women buying sex.

The results of data analysis from sex workers, presented in Chapter seven, provided a thorough description of the market for women buying sex in Australia. Sex workers who had serviced female clients were asked questions about what services are available, who buys it and how. Sex workers compared male and female client behaviours giving insight into human sexuality. Information gathered from sex workers was necessary before interviewing women who had bought sex in order to assist the relevant and language-specific questioning to experiential participants.

The last result chapter, Chapter eight presents data analysis from women who had bought sex. These diverse women had various motivations, methods of buying sex and different outcomes. The common factor between them, being a client of a sex worker/s, motivated them to be in this study and to contribute to academic knowledge in this area.

The final chapter in this thesis brings together the results of all three sub-studies, portrayals of women buying sex in media, and scholarly literature into a discussion. The chapter explains what it means when women buy sex, from three perspectives of social discourse, sex workers, and women who have bought sex. The study limitations, and academic and socio-political significance, are explored. The key findings of the project are presented in three sections of gender, sexuality, and power.

Summary

Prior to this thesis, a lack of empirical evidence of women buying sex maintained one sided debate about the sex industry which characterised males as sex buyers and women as

sex sellers. This thesis provides evidence to challenge and interrupt highly gendered debates about gender, sexuality and power. The results are of interest to sex industry and gender researchers, activists, social commentators, and actors involved in the sex industry as providers and/or consumers.

Chapter 2

The Visibility of Female Clients of Sex Workers in Academic Surveys and Media

This chapter investigates the survey data about women buying sex, questions why women may not be reporting their commercial sex activity when asked in surveys, and reveals the ways in which female sexuality is perceived in media. Extensive efforts to find academic publications about women buying sex were made searching electronic data bases, enlisting librarian guidance, and contacting scholars in the field with little result. Details of the literature search process are included in Appendices A and B. The research gap is exemplified through a rapid evidence assessment of studies about all clients of the sex trade by Wilcox et al. (2008). Wilcox et al. (2008) found 181 empirical papers overall, however female clients were rarely mentioned and then, only in the context of sex tourism. These findings further demonstrate a lack of research focusing on women who buy sex in their home countries and highlight a gender imbalance in previous research focus. In this chapter, I examine quantitative studies of broader focus which report on commercial sex activity to critique study methodologies and argue that methodological considerations have contributed to perceptions that women do not regularly buy sex, which in turn, dissuades further study and reinforces gendered imbalance. However, I then contrast academic constructions of women buying sex with those in popular media, examining the stereotypes and discourse which often separates female behaviour from male, and creates tension between female sexual empowerment and submission.

Survey Data

There have been some Australian surveys regarding commercial sex activity. As previously mentioned, the largest and most robust Australian study of sexual behaviour, the Australian longitudinal study of health and relationships, surveyed 9134 women in 2004/2005 and 10038 women in 2012/2013. They found less than one per cent of women had ever paid

for sex (Richters et al., 2014; Rissel et al., 2005). In another Australian study, Pitts et al. (2004) surveyed 1225 participants at an Australian adult industry exhibition; of the 604 self-identified women and transgendered persons, 11 had paid for sex (1.8%). These numbers were determined too few to enable analysis. Statistics such as these were referred to in an academic essay regarding sex tourism research by Jeffreys (2003), who uses the scale of the phenomena to argue that female sex tourism is rare compared with male sex tourism and concludes by saying we should not consider that “women do it too”. These assertions, when considered together with stereotypical understandings of female sexual behaviour as passive, seem to justify academic conclusions about women buying sex as rare.

Other countries have reported similar statistics in their national sex surveys (Hakim, 2015), although few report on female use of commercial sex. An exception was a survey in Norway which asked women if they had bought sex, finding very low prevalence; of 6220 women, only 23 (0.4%) had ever paid for sex (Schei & Stigum, 2010). In addition, the United Kingdom National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles (Natsal-3) found 0.1 per cent of women had paid for sex in the last five years of approximately 9000 women interviewed between 2010-2012 (Jones et al., 2015). With little evidence of women buying sex, there is little justification to ask women about their commercial sex experiences.

Survey Methodology

Survey methodology, influenced by social norms about sexuality, may contribute to these low prevalence findings. For example, the Natsal-3 study asked all genders if they had bought sex from an opposite sex provider and then asked only men if they had bought sex from a same sex provider¹ and the previous Natsal-2 survey asked only men if they had bought sex (Brooks-Gordon, 2010). The influences of social norms about sexuality, gender and power may cause a general failure to ask women about commercial sex use in studies of

¹ <http://www.natsal.ac.uk/media/2078/b1-capi-and-casi-questionnaire.pdf>

broader focus. These influences may also affect study methodologies in more subtle ways such as in a quantitative study of Danish tourists returning home which found eight per cent of women had attended strip clubs and one per cent reported paying for sex abroad; however, these figures appeared “unserious” to researchers and were discounted (Hesse & Tutenges, 2011). Considerations of these methodologies suggest two problems, empirical research has thus far has not been asking the questions, and when asked, women most often deny buying sex.

One of the obstacles with low rates of women reporting to have bought sex when asked in the surveys above is that women may not consider their activities as participating in commercial sex. An example of this occurred when Taylor (2001) asked tourist women who had engaged in sexual relations with local men in Jamaica, when none admitted to accepting offers of commercial sex from local gigolos. However, when the same women were asked if they had ever “helped” their local boyfriend(s) by giving cash, gifts or buying meals, 60% acknowledged an economic element to their relationships. Similarly, Tornqvist (2012) found women participating in sexual activity with dance teachers in Argentina, identified other women as being “fooled foreigners” whilst denying their involvement in the same. Denying a commercial element to female sexual activity is effected by actors and other stakeholders such as sex workers and sex researchers. Men, considered by sex researchers to be sex tourists, are not afforded the same consideration as demonstrated by Kempadoo (2001) who found only 20 per cent of males identified themselves to be sex tourists, with most looking for “love” and expressing disappointment in the commercial approach to sex industries in Western societies. The literature examined in the following chapter about the definition of female sex tourism deconstructs some structural collusions which contribute to the denial of female commercial sex activity.

A further reason for denial of commercial sex regards the categorisation and characterisation of it. Categorising a service as commercial sex is confusing due to the diversity of sex industry services. Harcourt and Donovan (2005) found over 25 different types of services in Australia. Some, such as specialist BDSM, *hands-on* sexual education, couples services or erotic dance, may not be conceptualised as paying for sex by women or men. In addition, stereotypical and exploitation narratives often describe sexual services as “legal rape” (Pateman, 1988), violence (Farley, Bindel, & Golding, 2009), and a sordid unemotional transaction of the objectification and sexualisation of someone who is “selling their body” (Niemi, 2010). These, more extreme characterisations of commercial sex, create distance between sex buyers and their identification as such, as few men or women would recognise their commercial sex activity as having a likeness to exploitation narratives. Omission and denial contribute to an academic absence of evidence of women buying sex in significant numbers in Australia.

There is however, evidence of Australian women buying sex in non-academic spaces including in the media. An Australian industry report used to gauge sex industry market opportunities, by IBISWorld (2010)² makes an estimation of the prevalence of women buying sex at six per cent of the total commercial sex market in Australia, and growing. The report, based on “educated opinion” (telephone conversation with the author), suggests that of the 12-16 million occasions of sexual services performed in Australia each year, 720,000 – 960,000 are procured by women (IBISWorld, 2010). Although these figures need to be used cautiously, when considered together with popular media and journalistic accounts of women buying sex, they do signify a possible academic void as a self-perpetuating oversight.

² Contact with IBISWorld research team, who claims to be Australia’s largest provider of industry based research, regarding the evidence base for the Sex Industry Report of 2010 confirmed that some of the information in the report was based on educated opinion and not published empirical research.
<http://www.ibisworld.com.au/about/default.aspx>

Media Representations of Women Buying Sex

The idea of women buying sex is in Australian social awareness due to media representations and messages about female sexuality and the sex industry. Depictions of women buying sex are found in fictional and in non-fiction documentary styles, visually on television and in online spaces and, in print in news and magazine articles.

Some examples, over time, of fictional representations of heterosexual gigolos and their clients include the following movies and television series:

- *Sunset Boulevard* (1950), about an aging, rich, has-been actress who hires a new “screen writer”/gigolo (IMDb. com, 2017b);
- *An American in Paris* (1951), where a struggling American artist in Paris is discovered for more than his artistic talent by a rich heiress (IMDb.com, 2017b);
- *The Roman Spring of Mrs Stone* (1961), in which a newly widowed and aging actress meets a male gigolo (IMDb. com, 2017a);
- *In, Just a Gigolo* (1978), an unemployed ex-war hero becomes a gigolo to lonely rich women (IMDb.com, 2017c);
- *American Gigolo* (1980), a movie about a male gigolo catering to older women (IMDb.com, 2017a); and,
- *Hung*, (2009-2011) a television series about an unemployed teacher who becomes a male gigolo with many types of female clients (Lipkin & Burson, 2009).

This brief, superficial and non-comprehensive list reveals two important notions for this project about women buying sex. Firstly, the idea that men can work as gigolos for women is neither recent nor novel. Secondly, when female clients are showcased in the synopsis of movies about them, they are most often stereotyped as older, rich and lonely women. Although these depictions are fictional, they suggest these portrayals are reflective of contemporary global understandings, and pose questions about them as reflections of society.

The most recent fictional television series *Hung*, depicts various types of female clients and may indicate a contemporary shift in stereotypical understandings.

Some more recent and non-fictional representations in media present more diverse representations of women buying sex, for example:

- An article in *The Observer*, in China, by Miller describes the female market for sex as entertainment, in which clients who are housewives, younger women, and tourists from Hong Kong and Taiwan (T. Miller, 2006);
- An article published on news.com by Piotrowski interviews male sex workers in Australia, and describes the clients as married women looking for sex and intimacy or vulnerable women post breakup (Piotrowski, 2013); and,
- A YouTube clip, *The Life of a Gigolo: Adria*, by Studio 10 features an interview with an Australian male escort in which female clients are described as middle aged women, and some couples (Studio 10, 2014).

These examples portray a greater age range and include some descriptions of situations which motivate women to buy sex such as being a tourist or newly separated. The examples of representations of women buying sex over time suggest stereotypical characterisations may be broadening however, the attitudes and concerns of society about women buying sex reported in media are telling in terms of messages about female sexuality.

The way that women buying sex are portrayed in media is important because for many people, mainstream media may be the only source of information used to understand and interpret social issues in general (Little, 2012), and particularly for issues in which they have no personal experience. Discourse in media is considered to be powerfully productive to the formation of understanding any social setting (G. Rose, 2001; Wadham, Pease, Atherton, & Lorentzen, 2012), and especially in regards to gender roles being performative, in which, media actively produce gender (Butler, 1999; Gill, 2007a). The following sections provide

some examples of media representations which dichotomise men and women, and then further dichotomise good and bad women in order to suggest both the importance and complexity of media messages and to reinforce a requirement for an empirical study of Australian social attitudes about female sexual agency and commercial sex.

Discourse about men and women buying sex.

Some media commentary about women buying sex, has a focus on men buying sex with an agenda to separate the behaviour of genders. In *The Sydney Morning Herald*, feminist writer Tankard Reist made gendered comparisons of clients of sex workers and equates women buying sex to objectification of male bodies, writing that women can now “have sex like men” including simulated intimacy (Tankard Reist, 2010), thus characterising buying sex as a male activity. Tankard Reist separates the behaviour of men and women through an argument that not many women buy sex, there is no history of women enslaving men, and no social construction of men as sluts who enjoy their own degradation (Tankard Reist, 2010). This evaluation positions patriarchy as a prominent factor in the commercialisation of sex, effectively excusing any rare women who might buy sex, as a misguided feminist in action. Similarly, an opinion piece in the *LA times* by an unknown author reported, “no one is willing to make this out as a victory for feminism”, and then described social responses about women buying sex to be from disgust to vague unease (“Not only can”, 2007). Although the *LA times* staff writer perceives mostly negative social views about women buying sex, there are changing and complex messages in media about female sexuality.

Discourse about female sexual empowerment and confidence.

Some media portrays the idea of women buying sex as evidence of women’s growing sexual confidence and of a new and progressive view of sexuality (Attwood, 2005). For example, a reality magazine article “When women buy men for sex”, in *Dame Magazine* by Gersten Ray (part 1 and 2), reported on interviews with male gigolos and their female clients,

describing women who buy sex to be empowered. (Gersten Ray, 2012a, 2012b). Gill (2007a) notes that postfeminist representations of confident, sexually assertive women now dominate advertising ideology, and ironically, men's bodies are more often represented as erotic. Interpreted at times as hedonistic indulgence of consumerism, selling sex to women has moved from fashion and beauty into self-help genres (Attwood, 2005), portraying sex as healthy, safe and pleasurable, and women who embrace it as holding sexual power.

Discourse about danger and promiscuity for women.

The most dominant theme in the online and print media in coverage about women buying sex, however, regards the dangers of buying sex for women. Examples of particular dangers include blackmail (Shaikh, 2006), being conned in "love scams" (Silver, 2013a), emotional pain (Silver, 2013b; Stichbury, 2016) and sexually transmitted infection (STI) transmission (Campbell, 2013). Further, some contemporary media representations, characterise women buying sex as possible stalkers of male sex workers due to female propensity to emotional behaviour (Law, 2014; Law, 2016). Emphasis on possible dangers of buying sex appear to be directed at women only; men are most likely represented non-compassionately as perpetrators of violence (Weitzer, 2009b).

A further negative consequence reported in media for women consuming sexual services and commodities are dangers of female sexual promiscuity (West Morris, 2012). For example, a YouTube documentary about female sex tourism, "RedNightCity", portrayed women buying sex as being dirty and promiscuous (RedNightCity, 2012). In addition to the dangers of sexual promiscuity for women listed above, one of the dominant messages about dangers of female promiscuity regard damage to one's reputation, enacted in society through the process of stigmatisation (Attwood, 2007).

Madonna/whore dichotomy in a post-feminist era.

A dichotomy exists as seemingly progressive views of female sexual power and agency are frequently questioned and counterbalanced by negative views. The dichotomy is a tension between victim feminism and third wave feminism, a tension which is not dissimilar to conflicts played out in Madonna/Whore dichotomies. Victim feminism, in which women are seen as victims of cultural sexualisation, particularly female sex workers and by extension, women buying sex are seen as victims of male sex workers. Victim feminism is increasingly reflected in media, popular culture and by government officials (Weitzer, 2010). Victim feminism is grounded in essentialist notions of gender or second wave feminism and appeals to moral concerns commanding sympathetic donations and political favour (Weitzer, 2009b).

Gill (2007b) describes, “everywhere, it seems, feminist ideas have become a kind of common sense, yet feminism has never been more bitterly repudiated” (p. 1). Post-feminist representations of women in the media align beauty culture and consumerism with power or *girl power* (West Morris, 2012). Girl power encourages traditional notions of femininity and individuality, while second wave feminist critics lament that it is an objectifying and commoditising trap, whereby women continue to adhere to patriarchal stereotypes of female beauty (West Morris, 2012). Girl sexual power, also termed *raunch culture*, retargets stripping, pornography and sex as avenues of female agency and empowerment, thereby allowing women to “have sex like a man” (Levy, 2005; Tankard Reist, 2010). New emphasis on pleasure as a motivating factor for sexual activity, and more women having political and economic agency, contribute to a raunch culture where women can buy sex.

Although images of sexually empowered women proliferate, disagreement among feminists as to women’s actual desires, continue. Some question female agency underlying empowerment feminism as “buying into” the patriarchal beauty culture in preparation for the

male gaze (Gleeson, 2013), repositioning representations of assertive female sexuality as a disguise for submission to male desire, thereby denying possibilities of female desire. Consequently, while empowerment femininity is promoted in popular culture, sexual autonomy may not be fully experienced in women's lives due to underlying characterisations of female sexuality as avenues for victimisation, disease and morality (Budgeon, 2016; Gill, 2007a). These disagreements about how representations of female sexual power are interpreted arise according to our ontological position, our understanding of how the concepts of gender, sexuality, and power relate to each other.

Women (Gender) Buy (Power) Sex (Sexuality): Ontology

The concepts of gender, sexuality and power underlie perceptions and constructions of women buying sex and therefore are prominent and fundamental to understanding the epistemology of this project.

Gender.

Long understood as fixed and biological, the concept of gender as separate to one's biological sex, began by psychiatrists and psychoanalysis's such as Freud when working with transgendered and intersexed people (Vanwesenbeeck, 2009). Freud's views about women's subordination to men rested on *penis envy* inferring men to be biologically dominant and powerful, however feminist theorists questioned women's subordination in terms of the oppression of social shaping (e.g. Rubin). Leiblum (2007) considers that "women's sexuality has evolved in an adaptive fashion and it is cultural constraints, social expectations, and interpersonal dissatisfactions – not biological, hormonal, or anatomical deficits – which effect women's conscious sexual motivation to desire emotional connection or the avoidance of negative consequences" (p. 7).

Social shaping of gender norms are now viewed as performative which Butler (1999) suggests, is beneficial. The "acting" of gender, brings a more compassionate understanding of

behaviour outside of traditional gender roles and infers we subjectively create our impersonation of gender, albeit, within the dominant conventions of society. When conducting gender specific research, Vanwesenbeeck (2009) issues caution against the use of fixed gender stereotypes and of “exaggerating the differences between the sexes, because of stereotyping, stigmatizing, and expectancy confirmatory processes” (p. 883). The consideration of gender and gender roles for this project as performative appreciates diversity of situations in which women buy sex, while understanding that women who buy sex are acting outside of expected gender roles.

A dominant heterosexual discourse dictates a binary logic in which women’s roles are represented as sexually passive, and experiencing desire for relationships with men over sexual pleasure (Budgeon, 2016). The gender stereotypes and discourse relevant here regard women as; not initiating sex to serve their own desires, that women desire love and not sex and, in turn, men desire sex and not love (Thompson & O’Sullivan, 2011). These narratives privilege men with untameable sex drives to which, women should submit. This heteronormative thinking posits that women might only receive sex from men, overlooking possibilities of women procuring a variety of sexual services from all genders.

An underlying principle of this project is to consider all gender and sexuality roles equally, lending itself to queer theory. The use of queer theory during data analysis breaks down norms and supports a stand taken by Vanwesenbeeck (2009) who explains that gender and sexuality are fundamentally conflated categories creating exaggerated polarisation between sexes which reinforces double standards. It is stereotypical expectations of gender behaviour which have a tendency to expectancy conformation, thus supporting the status quo (Vanwesenbeeck, 2009).

Sexuality.

The pioneers of scientific sexual knowledge include Kinsey (1940-50's), Masters and Johnson (from late 1950's), and Hite (from 1970), who have all been influential and met with methodological criticism. Despite advances in sexuality research, contemporary social constructions of female sexuality and commercial sex in medical practice, and police conduct and sex law, do not always align with scientific knowledge, for which Rubin (1992) lays blame on Victorian moral crusaders. Sexuality has long been considered taboo and a private activity, and the study of sexuality did not develop into a well-defined, well-regarded or well-funded field of research until the AIDS scare, re-framing sex research as *medical* and as a *public health* concern (Hakim, 2015). As a result, observes Hakim (2015), sex surveys of general population are funded by most countries to monitor and describe sexual activities. The performance of sexuality is both socially constructed (Berger & Luckmann, 1967) and a consequence of our physiology (Hakim, 2015). Consequently, sex research is multi-disciplinary and can include medicine, public health, health science, epidemiology, sociology, psychology, law, and the humanities.

An effect of sex research and large scale sex surveys has been the categorisation of gender and sexual behaviours which focus on social norms, effectively labelling behaviour outside strict norms as deviant. Using Foucault's notion of normalization, Gill considers "the state has been amassing more and more details about every aspect of populations lives in order to measure the norm" (p. 64), the influence of which has taken over from simple sovereign power (Gill, 2007a). In this way, sexual activity is privately and publically compared to societal norms within which we ought to conform (Gill, 2007b). Sexuality research, therefore, has an opportunity to critique societal norms through the impartial examination of behaviour which might challenge the perceived status quo. Jagose (2010) theorised that the most marginalised, pathologised and culturally devalued queer sexual

practices “have the capacity to intervene in dominant social values and organisational principles and their reproduction of normative life” (p. 518).

A recent intensity of sexuality scholarship interrogating the social construction and performance of femininity, albeit not as prolific as that regarding masculinity, is noted by Budgeon (2016) who found that heteronormative gender norms of female sexual passivity are still the dominant discourse despite new feminist empowerment constructions. Awareness and adoption of dominant discourse about gendered performance begins in early childhood where sex education in schools can play a transformative role in cultural awareness, extending and possibly challenging family values. The inclusion of ideologies of female pleasure in sex education were first suggested by Fine (1988), who determined that female adolescents could become subjects of sexuality, “initiators as well as negotiators”, thus “releasing them from a position of receptivity” (p. 33). Fine’s ground breaking appeal has not manifested into change in sex education programs in the United States (Fine & McClelland, 2006), or those delivered in Australian school rooms due to what Allen and Carmody (2012) consider to be problems with the way in which pleasure is “theoretically conceived”. Drawing on queer theoretical work by Jogose (2010) on pleasure and agency, Allen and Carmody (2012) found an absence of discourse of desire and a concentration on the dangers of desire for women and conceptualisation of males as predatory sexual subjects in school curricula. Female resistance to their categorisation as passive receptors of male sexual desire may indeed be occurring when women buy sex as Budgeon might hope. However, these acts of resistance to dominant femininity discourse may be disguised due to stigma - a means of social control - preventing women from expressing their sexual prowess, including when asked in survey questions. In this way, the study of women buying sex, has the capacity to challenge dominant discourse about female sexual passivity.

Women buying sex also challenge dominant discourse about commercial sex. What makes an act, desire or relationship sexual, is a matter of social definition (Pilcher, 2012), and what makes an act, desire or relationship to be sexual commerce is poorly defined. An example of poor definition can be found in academic literature where female sex tourists were termed *romance tourists*, and male sex tourists were not. Much of the definition and discourse about commercial sex rests on the relationship of gender ideologies and the concept of power.

Power.

The interception of gender, sexuality and power, generally underpin debate about commercial sex. The performance of gender and sexual acts occurs within society where various factors influence the amount of sexual power granted to individuals. Foucault's (1982) examination of freedom, power and liberalism asserts that power is essential in all human relations. Sexual power is most often afforded to men, who are expected to initiate sex (Rathus, Nevid & Fichner-Rathus, 1993), and are generally assumed to be the insertive and more active partner (essentialist thinking from a biological perspective), and via patriarchy (constructionist thinking). Female submission to men is expected and observed through assumption of *gatekeeper* roles, and expectations of being a receiving partner, and is policed via societal double standards of sexual behaviour where damage to a woman's reputation occurs through derogatory labels such as "slut" (Attwood, 2007). Contemporary society attempts to balance male power to command sex through the notion that sex should only be acquired by gaining consent. In this way, consent in heterosexual relationships is usually viewed as a woman's power, paradoxically failing to notice her receptive and passive role reinforcement.

The concept of sexual consent is always constructed within power relations, and in the circumstance of commercial sex the concept of male power underpins most debate assuming

only men are sex purchasers and privileging men with both gender power over women and consumer power over female sex workers. In her critique of power relations, Pateman (1988) suggests the “impossibility of real consent” in commercial sex due to the patriarchal construction of society. Extensions of Pateman’s speculation by abolitionist academics, and amplified through media, perniciously constructs all commercial sex as rape (Farley et al., 2009; Poppy Project, 2008). For example, Niemi (2010) can see no possibility of choice in selling sex when she asks, “when and how did we start to speak about ‘the purchase of sexual services’ when we really mean the sexual abuse of someone who has been forced or pressured into prostitution by economic or other problems” (p. 160). A notion which removes consensual capacity from sex workers and eradicates sex workers’ agency has serious repercussions for sex workers’ vulnerable positions in legal systems when they are raped (Sullivan, 2007), and is grounded in fixed gender stereotypes of sex as a shameful choice of activity for women. Niemi (2010) suggests the legal language used to describe sexual services de-genders sex buyers because they are not specifically named as men. The possibilities of women buying sex are overlooked by Niemi, perhaps due to one-sided representations of male sexual power, meaning exploitation narratives about the sex industry do not persevere when challenged with a gender role switch.

Summary

In the context of contemporary Australian society’s treatment of female sexual empowerment, and individual enactments, genuine challenges to the scientific investigation of women buying sex are evident. Gender difference as a focal point of sexuality research contributes to shaping social convention thus creating rifts between genders, forming binaries and further positioning women in Madonna/Whore dichotomies, all of which, can influence individual behaviours and may lead to confirmation bias in sex surveys. For example, when men perform masculinity through desiring sex more than women, they may contribute to

findings that men suffer a sexual deficit. Hakim (2015) reviewed global sex surveys finding men suffer a sexual deficit when sexual satisfaction between genders are surveyed. Male and female sexual appetite are largely considered equal in biological studies (Bergner, 2013), meaning gender difference in sociological studies may be due to either confirmation bias in participants' answers or actual difference due to gendered performance bias. Similar influences may affect women's responses about their commercial sex use when asked in sex surveys. The idea of women buying sex begs to be exposed to academic and social debate, making visible their challenge to discourse about female sexual agency and the sex industry.

Chapter 3

Academic Evidence of Female Sex Tourism and Consumption of Erotic Dance

Survey data may or may not indicate the prevalence of women buying sex however, analysis of the ways in which women buy sex, their behaviours and attitudes may be more influential to advance our understanding and in challenging the one-sided gender debate. Henceforth, I examine 22 academic papers to discuss female sex tourism and four papers on erotic dance to consider the similarities and differences with women who may buy sex within Australia. These papers were identified after extensive research efforts in electronic data bases and contacting scholars in the field, as detailed in Appendices A and B. One of these papers is an analysis of two fictional plays (Aston, 2008) and three are academic opinion pieces (Bandyopadhyay, 2013; Jeffreys, 2003; West Morris, 2012). The remaining sex tourism papers, are based on empirical works in countries of destination, and one is based on tourists returning home (Hesse & Tutenges, 2011). The tourist destinations studied include five from the Caribbean (Kempadoo, 2001; Phillips, 2008; Taylor, 2001, 2006; Weichselbaumer, 2012), five from South America (Bauer, 2009; Bayer et al., 2013; Cabezas, 2004, 2011; Tornqvist, 2012), two from Sri Lanka (Lee-Gonyea, Castle, & Gonyea, 2009; J. Miller, 2011) and Indonesia (Campbell, 2013; Jennaway, 2008) and, one each from China (Liu, Liu, Cai, Rhondes, & Hong, 2009), Egypt (Jacobs, 2009) and the Philippines (Davis & Miles, 2013). In addition to sex tourism papers, four papers were found about women consuming erotic dance. Erotic dance is classified by Australian law as a sexual service, and these papers are examined in terms of customer motivations and behaviour (Montemurro, Bloom, & Madell, 2003; Pilcher, 2012; Scull, 2013; C. Smith, 2002).

There were three major themes that emerged from analysis of the literature on female sex tourism and erotic dance which illustrate gendered perceptions and academic discourse about women buying sex. The first theme is about defining sex buyers, and illustrates ways in

which ideas about female sexuality shape arguments about women buying sex. The second theme centres on commercial sex as a power exchange, highlighting flaws in gendered arguments. The third theme regards other issues relevant to female sex tourism, such as racial exploitation, demonstrating how racial othering creates a diversion away from women identifying as sex buyers.

Defining Female Commercial Sex Use in Tourism and Erotic Dance

The definition of sex and commercial sex is often confounded by moral opinion and even more so, debate about the definition of female sex tourism, is entangled by ideology about female sexuality. For example, Jeffreys (2003) theorises, contrary to limited evidence, that the behaviour of male and female sex tourists are so profoundly different that “women should simply not be included in any definition of sex tourism” (p. 228). During her empirical work with female sex tourists in the Caribbean, Taylor (2001) found the behaviour of *First World* male and female tourists to be the similar, however, she observed the behaviour to be generally interpreted in very different ways by researchers. Taylor’s observation is supported by identifying gendered research focus on sex tourists. Research on male sex tourists has focused on violence, entitlement, racism, number of partners and STI risk (Bandyopadhyay, 2013; Hamlyn, Peer, & Easterbrook, 2007; Hesse & Tutenges, 2011) while research on female sex tourists has centred around romance and being exploited by male predators (Jennaway, 2008; Taylor, 2001; Tornqvist, 2012). A disconnect between the focus of research between genders of sex buyers contributes to notions that behaviour is gender dependant when buying sex. Questions about the definition of female sex tourism have focused on motivations of sex workers and tourists, implications of individual actors’ identification as sex workers or sex tourists, modes of transactions, and gender differences in expected and actual levels of aggression.

Definitions based on romantic feelings.

Regardless of awareness of economic advantage, some tourists having sex with locals deny commercial use by framing their motivations along more traditional Western romantic lines. Denial is not gender dependant. Taylor (2006) noted that male sex tourists also embrace a wide range of activities and relationships with local women including romance and gift giving. The demonization of commercial sex, characterised in exploitation narratives, may play a role in making definitions of sex tourism un-relatable to most actors. On the other hand, the construction of romantic love in Western society, as an irresistibly, powerful force, to which one joyfully succumbs, is much more relatable to some sex tourists experiences.

The concept of pleasure is erased in international politics of sexual encounters which constantly qualifies inequalities of power relations. Jeffreys (2003) asserts that prostituted women service men without any sexual pleasure yet sex tourist women are sexually servicing male sex workers due to the power dynamics of male dominance. Jeffreys referenced her stance with a quote from a Barbadian beach boy who said tourist women enjoy giving oral sex – an activity that Jeffreys considers is only carried out for male pleasure (Jeffreys 2003). Using a script of females owning sex, ideally to be given only in specific situations involving romantic feelings, negates pleasure, choice and even consent in temporary, convenient or commercial relationships. The concept of pleasure has been neglected as a commodity in most constructions of the sex industry, perhaps considered frivolous or unimportant to research efforts. In addition, research project funding is often based on social significance, meaning the risks of buying sex have been of far more interest.

The existing literature on female sex tourism has reinforced gendered stereotypes regarding the concept of romantic love. For example, Jeffreys (2003) stated that romance tourism is a better term for women who have commercial sex with locals whilst on holiday as the term is more suited to the behaviour. Cabezas (2004) concludes that it is inappropriate for

researchers to label sex workers and female tourists as such if they do not so identify, due to a blurring of labour practises and romantic relationships. Tornqvist suggests that we “enlarge the scope of critical sex studies to allow us to examine the variety of ways in which romance and sensual pleasures interweave with dimensions of economy, power and vulnerability” (2012, p. 37). However, Tornqvist prefers the term romance tourism over sex tourism, citing full sexual relationships as less common although tourist dance students partake in commercial sensual pleasure when dancing.

The construction of love and romance in commercial sex may absolve female tourists of predatory behaviour and possibly provide opportunities for enterprising sex workers who may capitalise on performances of romance. Jeffreys describes female tourists who might have sex with locals as “succumbing to continuous seduction and sexual harassment by beach boys, as their sexuality is constructed out of powerlessness, while men’s sexual expression lies in dominance” (2003, p. 228). There have been documented cases of women being coerced into sexual relations with locals in media, such as (“Women discovers”, 2014; Silver, 2013a), but no empirical academic examples were found. Jennaway (2008) specifically examined cowboys in Balinese settings who enact skilful “performances of love” with wealthy foreign women finding there are fewer eligible targets, as tourism in Bali is falling and women “wiseup”.

Obviously the sexual tourist cannot be categorised as predatory or unsophisticated based on gender alone. To further distance female sex tourists from male behaviour, Jeffreys (2003) describes males who do not identify as sex tourists as “naïve because their knowledge of a prostitution script through pornography entitles them to behave as sexual perpetrators and women really are naïve in the absence of a similar script” (p. 227). However, all genders consume pornography in Australia (McKee, Albury, & Lumby, 2008) and men and women consume fantasies and ideas of romance tourism through works of fiction in books (eg. *Eat*,

Pray, Love by Elizabeth Gilbert), plays (eg. *Sugar Mommas* written by Kim Gupta.) and films (eg. *Shirley Valentine* directed by Lewis Gilbert). Framing sex tourism involving financial exchange as romance may have economic and psychological advantages and disadvantages for sex providers and consumers of all genders.

Definition based on sex worker identification.

The identification of women buying sex, or not, may affect or be effected by the ways in which providers of sexual services identify. Though romance tourism seemed an appropriate description of how women who bought sex in the Caribbean identified, it did not reflect sex workers' experiences or definitions (Kempadoo, 2001). Taylor (2006) found that the few male sex workers who identified as such had a more professional approach to sexual encounters that allowed them to control the transactions in terms of payment and services, and men who did not identify as sex workers often had to perform menial tasks such as fetching and carrying whilst not asking for payment up front. Perhaps gender stereotypes contribute to the circumstance that females working with sexual labour are far more likely to identify as sex workers than males doing the same work (Kempadoo, 2001). The degree to which sex tourists would more readily identify as such when service providers identified as sex workers is unknown, but may have significance in terms of using safer sex practises, providing clarity around consent versus coercion, and would likely affect answers participants give to research questions about commercial sex.

The term "sex tourism" implies commercial sex, yet is sometimes applied to all sexual activity between tourists and locals. An ethnographic study of female sex tourists in Sinai examined gender and racial roles of Western women who had relationships with locals without reporting on any financial considerations (Jacobs, 2009). Although there was an obvious economic inequity within sexual relationships, it is not clear that participants had used economic advantage to acquire sex (Jacobs, 2009). As opposed to commercial sex in

home countries, sex tourism, however defined, needs also to consider inequities of economic and racial power. Consider Aston's statement: "sexual pleasure as a capitalist and colonialist trade is not feminist power, but an abuse of straight, white, sexual power and economic privilege" (2008, p. 190). Aston's perception of acquiring commercial sex as abuse of privilege fails to acknowledge consensual, negotiated exchange while trying to identify capitalism as a driving force. These convoluted arguments reveal that many debates about female sex tourism grapple with underlying ideology about the sacredness of sex which should not be bought or sold.

Definitions based on modes of transaction.

Defining commercial sex tourism as an explicit transaction involving money is problematic for researchers. Taylor (2001) found tourist women are unlikely to admit to commercial sex. Cabezas (2004) has also acknowledged that a more complex analytical framework around the definition of sex work be used than one defining sex tourism as solely involving monetary exchange. Sex work is also about opportunities for local people; of recreation, consumption, travel, migration and marriage as well as sex and money (Cabezas, 2004). Research focus can be misleading, for example, Berdychesky, Yaniv, and Uriely (2013) specifically examined female tourist sexual behaviour exclusively from commercial sex, describing adventurous, casual encounters without apparently asking participants about racial or economic advantage or exchange. As money is not the only currency exchanged for sex, a definition of commercial sex needs to consider other economic advantages, which can be challenging for researchers.

Some attempts to define female sex tourism have lent upon the motivations of tourist women having sex with locals, and particularly, upon whether women were consciously aware of their economic power. It must be noted here that research into male sex tourism has not considered conscious awareness as a defining moment of sex purchasing. In addition to

the Caribbean study results, Bauer (2009) found some women in Cuzco, Peru, also did not realise that they were part of the benefit system of paying for meals, drinks, accommodation, and trips. One participant said she did not want to be a sugar mama and would never give money or anything else they asked for, yet did pay for all the meals of the men she had met. Bauer (2009) was surprised when most interviewees described the situation as if they were exclusively talking about somebody else, denying that they could be seen as doing the same. “While they were critical of other women, their own case was perceived as different” (p. 354), said Bauer (2009). Similarly, Tornqvist’s (2012) participants in a study of tourist behaviour in tango clubs of Argentina, were well aware of images of the deviant female sex tourist as “cheap white-trash” and constructed the motivations of men who might be interested in them as anything other than financial reasons, thereby avoiding identifying as “another fooled foreigner”. Non-explicit negotiation for sexual services is a concern for researchers trying to define commercial sex and care needs to be taken to ensure that definitions are used consistently for all genders.

Definitions based on behaviour.

In response to notions similar to Jeffreys (2003) assertion that women do not behave assertively or with aggression, this section examines the literature about women buying sexual services including erotic dance for evidence of gendered behaviour. Erotic dance is included as a sexual service in this review as a few studies have found some women did pay for sex with male dances (Kaufman, 2009; Scull, 2013). Additionally, the visibility of customer behaviour in observant research, make the literature on erotic dance particularly relevant to this discussion. In contrast, all sex tourism research in this review has used methods which largely rely on participant self-description of their behaviour. As the literature is inconsistent in regards to direct comparisons of gendered behaviour, I present evidence

from the literature of female behaviour which is normally attributed to men such as objectification, assertive or aggressive behaviour, and promiscuity.

Objectification.

The business of erotic dance has traditionally been characterised as an avenue for men to sexually objectify women (Gleeson, 2013; Pilcher, 2012), and it is important to note that female customers attend fixed venue strip clubs to view female performers and there is a profitable industry of men who dance for female customers (Montemurro, 2001). The presence of female patrons of strippers challenge stereotypes that they are sexually repressed and not turned on by visual stimuli (Montemurro, 2001). The commodity of male stripping offers male sexuality as fun, expressive and desirous of women's pleasure and approval, a reversal of traditional gender roles.

The charge of objectification has been denounced to men, particularly in attempts to characterise objects of desire to be victims of exploitation. In one of the most important papers in this review, Pilcher (2012) examined behaviour of female dancers and customers of an erotic dance club for women only, finding that they enjoyed being active sexual agents, subverting constructions of female sexual passivity. She found in the women only space, women had circumscribed notions of particular types of feminine beauty, not necessarily supporting heteronormative ideals, yet used their critique of bodies in attempts to police lesbian sexuality within their community in similar ways that men do (Pilcher, 2012). Further, Pilcher (2012) found some evidence of objectification and a sense of entitlement to commercial bodies in the female gaze, however some customers were critical of their own enjoyment and engagement fearing they were exploiting the dancers. Sexual objectification is not a gendered domain and this concept is revisited in a more general sense in the section regarding the conceptualisation of sexuality.

Assertive behaviour.

The active participation in the purchase of sexual services, a progression from the passive gaze of objectification, has also come under scrutiny as a specifically male behaviour. When men desire particular types of bodies or personalities in commercial sex, they are accused of being shallow and entitled (Farley et al., 2009; Monto, 2004). However, an empirical study based in the Caribbean described some women who will specify their exact requirements as purchasers of sex with a person of particular age, penis size, skin tone, body type and even smell, and they negotiate prices up front (Taylor, 2001). Consumer power to command particular characteristics in a provider need not invoke disgust based on gender of the consumer, yet, may trigger morality regarding the commercialisation of sex in general.

Consumer behaviour observed in strip clubs by C. Smith (2002) noticed male audiences to be usually silent at female strip clubs yet female audiences at male strip clubs provoke ribaldry. Although bawdy, most women at male strip clubs adhered to rules however, “no touch” rules were regularly violated by women (Kaufman, 2009). Rule violations could reflect settings where women have not been long-term patrons to establish behavioural norms as have men. However, ignorance of codes of behaviour should not be a gendered privilege. A reluctance to describe female strip patrons who act in “sexually wild” and assertive ways is demonstrated by Scull (2013) who alternatively describes female patrons as having “gender role transcendence”. Rather, Montemurro (2001) has no such sensitivities describing some women who physically abused or degraded male dancers as instilling, “feelings of surprise, shock, and even disgust with respect to the behavior of women as patrons at these clubs” (p.294). There is clear evidence of female aggression in erotic dance venues, however, the interpretation of their behaviour is not as clear.

In discussion of aggressive female behaviour, Montemurro (2001) suggests women can get away with more aggressive behaviour because they are women and less physically

threatening to dancers. For these reasons, Scull (2013), deems that men can still reinforce gender inequalities and domination of women due to their increased size and strength. In these ways, argues Scull (2013), female patrons of male strip clubs do not particularly challenge gender norms. This may be why, when observing women in women-only spaces, Pilcher (2012) argues that women behaving aggressively in strip clubs may reflect a lack of a framework within which women can be conceived as sexual agents beyond heteronormativity. Pilcher (2012) concludes by acknowledging that women dancing for women did not fully challenge heteronormativity because of rigid binary gendered sexual constructions, a lack of language outside of patriarchy to describe feelings and behaviours, and an undeveloped female gaze. More research is needed, however, as women do challenge rigid binary roles by paying for erotic dance entertainment, enjoying and receiving sexual pleasure from it. The scale of erotic dance marketed to women is smaller, and of note, ribald female behaviour appears to be encouraged.

Violence.

There were no evidence of women behaving violently toward sex workers, other than erotic dancers, in the literature. One of the key differences between male and female tourist behaviour in the literature were levels of reported violence. Taylor found female sex workers reported more violence than did males, reflecting general gender roles (Taylor, 2001) and levels of intimate partner violence in general society. While it is evident that women suffer sexual violence at greater levels than do men, violence in female sex tourism was not prominent in the empirical literature.

Promiscuity and STI risk.

Evidence of sex tourism, and intensity of morality, is typically considered to be relevant to the number of sexual partners whilst on holiday. Philandering is usually attributed to men, however, some detailed empirical work to examine the number of partners per female

tourist was reported by Taylor (2001). She found that the majority of women who had sex with locals whilst holidaying in the Caribbean, formed only one such relationship and many repeat visitors were continuing a former relationship. However 27% of women surveyed who had sex with locals reported two or more partners. These relationships were described as “holiday romance” by 42% of women in Jamaica and “real love” by 13%. In the Dominican Republic, 39% described their relationships as real love and 26% as a holiday romance. Only three per cent of women described their sexual relationships as purely physical. However, these self-descriptors can be misleading, for example one of the women who described her relationships as holiday romances, had had three partners in one week (Taylor, 2001). Further from self-descriptions, researcher observations can be ambiguous for example, female sex tourists often receive sympathy for being “lonely women” (Jeffreys, 2003), a consideration not offered to male sex tourists.

Assessing the numbers of partners for sex tourists traditionally has a dual role of ascribing promiscuity as a male trait and a measurement of STI risk among specific populations. The contagion of STI’s is considered a health problem that continues to attract research attention particularly for sex workers in emerging nations. Denial about who is and isn’t a sex tourist/worker is directly related to less compliance with safer sex practices. Therefore, sex worker identification is important, particularly in rates of using safer sex practises where sex workers had higher condom compliance than casual romantic relations (Chin Phua, 2010). Only 67% of the women who had sex with locals in the Caribbean in Taylor’s 2001 study reported using condoms. The 15% who admitted to taking no precautions against the risk of STI’s described their relationships as true love. The highest level of condom use was in those women who reported multiple partners and acknowledged economic elements to their relationships (Taylor, 2001). Phillips (2008) found attitudes in female sex tourist towards safe sex practices to be “indifferent at best”, with condom use

depending on degrees of sobriety and romantic frameworks. Alarming, “no interviewee had been tested for HIV/AIDS” (Phillips, 2008, p. 209). Bauer (2009), who found condom use by women traveling overseas to be disappointing, suggests reasons why include, “situational constraints”, such as availability and spontaneous situations. None of the scholarly work regarding female sex tourism found safer sex practices to be as high as males participating in the same behaviour, highlighting the dangers of denial and lack of definitions. These realities alone should inspire urgent research into condom use in women who buy sex in any capacity. The implications of finding poor condom use could assist the mobilisation of health care workers to target women buying sex as a vulnerable population. On the other hand, findings of high condom compliance could be useful for researchers unpacking multiple complexities when women access commercial sex.

The literature about female sex tourism and engagement of erotic dance does not expose comprehensive behavioural differences between genders. The definition of female sex tourism should not be influenced by perceptions of behaviour considered to be objectifying, assertive or aggressive, or promiscuous.

Attempts to define commercial sex tourism have failed due to the above questions of gender, motivations and intent. There are no equivalent debates about male sex tourism although male tourists have been found to have similar motivations, behaviours, and self-denial. Allowing debate about female sex tourism to be different than male sex tourism as exemplified by the term, romance tourism, or denying the very phenomenon of female tourists using economic advantage to engage locals in sexual activity is clearly an ideological stance about female sexuality. The challenge for researchers is to be open to possibilities of women buying sex, designing projects which acknowledge social-cultural sensibilities about female sexuality which attempt to obscure realities, thereby reinforcing double standards, and further encourage women who buy sex to deny and minimise their actions.

Power Relations in Female Sex Tourism

Power relations are central to discussions about commercial sex and are most often grounded in gendered power debate. When women buy sex, they challenge gendered power debate, however when women buy sex on holiday, their unexpected gendered behaviour is framed as something different from stereotypical male behaviour. This section unpacks some of these power debates by exemplifying the literature on female sex tourism. It questions power as a motivation to buy sex, as a sexual conquest, in terms of exploitation and various methods which determine who holds which power in commercial sexual relationships.

Power as a motivation.

Sex tourism as a power exchange needs to consider consumer power aside from gendered power. Kempadoo (2001) considers the motivation of women to buy sex as triggering behaviour where women experiment with control over men. Specifically, the women participating in sex tourism:

...generally spoke of feeling powerful in relation to local men, and some women also described feeling empowered in relation to white men, for in the Caribbean, where they could command the sexual attentions of black men, white men no longer had the power to control or reject them sexually. As affluent Western tourists, they are able to use their economic power to limit the risk of being challenged or subjugated (Taylor, 2006, p. 42).

Power in sexual relations is not a finite or measurable quality. Feeling powerful in an intimate relationship is not necessarily having more power than one's partner. Jeffreys (2003) considers; "The local men remain in control of the sexual interaction as they would in sexual relations with any woman by virtue of male privilege and the construction of male dominant sexuality" (Jeffreys, 2003, p. 229). This patriarchal focus may be the reason Jacobs (2009) described the motivations of women to buy sex in Egypt, as a desire to experience a more

satisfying ideal of femininity through the adoption of a *masculine* identity. These constructions of gendered identity consider initiation and negotiation of sexual relations, or taking control of a situation, to be essentially male traits, while ignoring consumer power.

Power of sexual conquests.

To further argue consumer power in male sex tourism, Jeffreys (2003) grants only male consumer power by exemplifying male sex tourism as an opportunity to enhance comradely amongst tourist men through their increased masculine status when “making sexual use of local women”, while saying tourist women have nothing to gain by boasting of their sexual conquests. However, in Aston’s (2008) deconstruction of two fictional plays about female sex tourism, she describes women competing against women for their right to sexual pleasure and empowerment. In an examination of the motivations of women at an established male strip club in the USA, Montemurro et al. (2003), concludes that the majority of women come to bond with their friends and have a good time, and although an outlet for sexual expression, it is not the primary motivation as it is for men. Both Montemurro et al. (2003) and Pilcher (2012) found, one of the primary reason for attendance at the female strip club was for “women only” space and bonding.

Sexual exploitation.

One of the primary purposes of gendered power debate, is to determine an extent of sexual exploitation. Sexual exploitation, explains Taylor (2006), implies that one party to a sexual interaction took advantage of an imbalance of power to obtain a sexual advantage that would otherwise be denied them. Taylor explains that the advantage is not necessarily violent nor that the exploited would necessarily subjectively feel victimised, violated or exploited. Tornqvist (2012) illustrates an example of denial of economic power when she interviewed tango tourists of Argentina, who had sex with their paid dance teachers, and downplayed economic inequity by constructing their dance teachers as “pretty wealthy” within

Argentinean culture. Questions are raised from this example and more broadly, about who has the authority to call sexploitation and which factors determine an imbalance of power to enable sexual advantage.

Sexploitation measured by harms.

Scholars, who are often described as sex industry abolitionists (Weitzer, 2015), define sexploitation through the use of a measure of harm to sex workers. Measures of harm have a gendered element as female sex work, and not male, is equated with violence and sexploitation by abolitionists (Farley et al., 2009). All of the papers about female sex tourists in this review refer to female tourists buying sex from male locals, allowing a brief analysis of potential benefits or harms for male sex workers. Male sex workers “do not have evidence of traumatic harm of repeated sexual violations from female tourists” suggests Jeffreys (2003, p. 229), and they may gain superior masculine status in societies for their sexual conquests. Indeed, Kempadoo (2001) found that local discourses privilege sex working men as having a *hyperactive virility*. In Cuzco, Peru, tourists represented an exotic trophy for men and sexual encounters were assessed as providing mutual benefit (Bauer, 2009). Cabezas (2004) found, “male sex workers are perceived as a powerful extension of Cuban national identity, vanquishing the foreign intruder” (Cabezas, 2004, p. 1008) and are rarely harassed by police when female sex workers are (Taylor, 2001). Conversely, female sex workers are “seen to represent the incursion of capitalism, defilement of nationalist pride, and erosion of patriarchal domain” (Cabezas, 2004, p. 1008). These results give the impression that male sex work, and not female, has some psycho-social benefit, suggesting male sex workers have greater power than females, and frame male sex workers as unable to suffer exploitation from female clients.

Harms for male sex workers.

Most scholars agree that male sex work is not inherently beneficial and could be harmful in some circumstances. Aston (2008) describes hypersexual male gigolo behaviour as a cover for the risk and humiliation at having to earn money by “selling their bodies” which threatens their spiritual as well as physical well-being. Some male sex workers expressed a sense of rejection, disappointment, betrayal and dishonour due to the treatment from female sex tourists (Taylor, 2006). Bauer (2009) noted that some tourist women appreciated the emotional suffering of the partners when tourists departed Cuzco, as men were very affectionate, yet other tourist women considered that local men do not fall in love, “sex for the men is probably fun but nothing else” (Bauer, 2009, p. 352). Mixed perceptions of benefits or harms to men who sell sex to female tourists are apparent and should be critically analysed for ideological bias which position various sexual acts as inherently harmful without room to consider any significance to individuals.

Weichselbaumer (2012) considers discourses which present male sex workers as the passive objects of tourist desires with no agency, to be perpetuating the very structure of dominance that they claim to criticize, having a colonizing rather than liberating effect on local populations. Kempadoo (2001) describes the collated findings of eight studies and found that a prominent characteristic from sex workers in many poor countries were high levels of personal autonomy over their activities and earnings. This characteristic was true for male and female sex workers, young and old and there were a distinct lack of pimps and trafficking in their narratives. Clearly, sex worker status has different meanings for different people and situations, disabling a generalist or gender-ist position on sex worker benefits or harms. Likewise, a gender-ist position on powers felt by male or female sex tourists is an oversimplification.

Economic aid.

Further to considering the effects of performing sex work upon individuals, sex tourism has been theorized as providing economic aid to communities. Taylor (2006) demonstrates that sex in the Caribbean carries an important economic value, particularly, the “exotic black male body”, the exchange of which is a form of resistance against poverty, marginalization and exclusion. Where tourism represents the major earnings for the state, there is a continual reliance on former colonial powers and outside forces for economic stability (Cabezas, 2004). Cabezas believes that sex tourism has the greatest social, political and economic impact of all tourism. For those hospitality workers who engage in sex work, their low wages are subsidized and the wealth of tourists is redistributed from the formal tourist sector (Cabezas, 2011).

The consideration of gendered power when critiquing empirical research is another area where researcher ideology about male and female sexuality is revealed. When power exchange in commercial sex is determined by harms or advantages to sex workers, the gender of sex worker is not relevant. When power exchange in commercial sex is based on subjective feelings that people who buy sex experience, gender is also not relevant. Academic debates about power exchange in commercial sex should reflect appropriate data, yet there are few empirical accounts from women buying sex to rely upon. Aside from gender or economic power, inequities in racial power have also been considered exploitative.

Racism, Exotic Destinations and Desire

International tourism, defined by Western colonial discourse, emphasizes a cultural divide, often casting the alien *other* as inferior, barbaric and hypersexual (Weichselbaumer, 2012). Much of the scholarly literature regarding female sex tourism assumes that Western female desire is inspired by the black hypersexual male fantasy (Weichselbaumer, 2012). Skin colour, Cabezas (2004) explains, denotes the social categorization of who is and isn't a

sex worker or sex tourist regardless of gender. For example, a dark skinned woman alone in a tourist area would be considered a sex worker, when a fair skinned woman would not; a fair skinned woman with a black man is perceived as a sex tourist, but a fair skinned woman dating fair skinned men would not. “Desire and affection are defined as lighter and prostitution as darker, effectively racializing the entire process” (Cabezas, 2004, p. 1004). Phillips (2008) explains a paradox for the meanings of racializing the *black Barbadian hustler* where he is able to espouse cultural symbols of masculinity and gains feelings of superiority from having sexual relations with white women, however, “most Barbadians distance themselves from hustlers to dissociate from stereotypes of blacks, causing them to be disassociated from local society” (Phillips, 2008, p. 207).

It is clear that racialized eroticism is of importance to the sex tourist. Both male and female tourists have eroticized Caribbean men and women with sexual fantasy and exploits using the Caribbean as a place to consolidate or redefine their own cultural identities (Kempadoo, 2001). The narratives of women travellers to the Caribbean who had sex with local men varied greatly in their descriptions of black masculinity; for example, “a mystic rasta hairstyle, beautifully built...not the face, I cannot remember the face – but the other endowment, yes” (Weichselbaumer, 2012, p. 1224). Racial othering was noted in other regions. For example, a mostly staged spirituality, the *Pachamama* that values caring behaviours such as giving massages and listening was used by local Peruvian men to attract tourist women (Bauer, 2009). Kempadoo (2001, p. 57), considers evidence of Pachamama to underscore the point that masculine hegemony in sex work narrative is not entirely appropriate. The paradox, says Taylor, “is that in celebrating the power and strength of the black phallus, black men who are economically and socially marginalized play into rather than resist white racist stereotypes about the black male as hypersexual” (Taylor, 2006, p. 42). When arguing sexploitation harms to black male sex workers, claims vary from,

racialized hyperactive sexual virility as a privileged position in society, a reluctantly adopted position for marketing purposes, or, as a resistance to the humiliation of having to “sell their bodies”.

Much of sex tourism investigation focuses on the exploitation of developing countries, which is, itself, a form of racial othering. In juxtaposition to Westernised racial othering, Bandyopadhyay (2013) notes, “millions of Indian and Chinese tourists visit North American, European and Australian destinations having been fed media images of Western women as promiscuous” (p. 1). Bandyopadhyay calls for further research in sex tourism from *East to West* to challenge racialised debate. Researcher efforts in sex tourism have thus far rested mainly on economic disadvantage, making racial concerns inevitable as racial inequities are embedded within global economies.

Racial othering is a fundamental aspect in the determination of a tourist destination as exotic. A further dynamic of sex tourism is *situational disinhibition*, allowing women to indulge in sexual pleasure in ways that they feel they are unable to do at home, creating a sensation of “feeling like a different person” (Aston, 2008). Indeed, Weichselbaumer (2012) describes *carnavalesque* as the enabling factor that feels as if one is swept away by atmosphere. In the Caribbean, the carnival is a festivity where traditional hierarchies are set aside and lewd, licentious behaviour rules (Weichselbaumer, 2012). It is not clear whether situational disinhibition explains or excuses behaviour outside of social norms, however it is clear that male sex tourists are not afforded the same. Weichselbaumer assumes women desire love and that feelings of love and commercial sex are mutually exclusive, when she describes, “Carnavalesque can serve as a metaphor for the dissolution of the dichotomy between love and sex work; it also indicates the blurring of who constitutes the high and the low within the relationship. Power comes from all directions and neither of the two parties seems to clearly hold the upper hand” (Weichselbaumer, 2012, p. 1224). If carnivalesque

explains errant behaviour of women while on holiday, questions must be raised, about women buying sex at home.

Summary

Empirical evidence confirms that women buy sexual services whilst away from home and in the form of erotic dance despite attempts to sanitise or rename the phenomenon. The motivations and behaviour of these women seem to be similar to men in most areas except for fewer reports of physical violence and condom compliance in female consumers. These inconvenient findings about female tourist behaviour as a challenge to traditional gender roles, are often reframed and discounted on the basis of victim-feminist gender role reinforcement. Thus, a new double standard is created. Discourses portraying women as passive victims in cultural sexualisation, deny them sexual license and differ not from conservative fear of women's sexual expressions which disallow women to be sexual on their own terms.

The literature sources for this review also reveal a hetero-normative view of the sex industry in research efforts. Only one paper investigated lesbian women. Men do not only buy sex from women, and it is probable that women do not exclusively buy sex from men. These ruminations are unlikely to result in research focus until empirical evidence demonstrates legitimacy to this claim. However, if women buy sex from women they bypass connotations of gendered power and patriarchy, and perhaps provide the most robust challenge to gendered sex industry debate. Further research gaps are noted through finding no academic examination of any tourists in Australia accessing sex workers, as Australia is a popular tourist destination. Research deficits and gendered research efforts are highlighted through this examination.

Until such time as women who buy sex in subtle ways admit their involvement to themselves and to researchers when participating in sexuality research, the prevalence of

women buying sex in their home countries will be grossly underestimated. When women buy sex in their home countries, situational disinhibition and inequities in race and economy cannot be used to explain behaviour as something they would not normally do. An examination of women buying sex in Australia carries none of the baggage of tourism research, leaving bare women's motivations in more equitable context, notwithstanding the structural effects of patriarchy and capitalism.

This literature review has revealed a double standard by society and researchers in that women are often treated differently to men when they purchase sex. This thesis, in providing the first evidence that women buy sex in Australia, seeks to redress gendered focus through the use of queer theory which considers behaviour and not gender as paramount. Further, this exploratory project strives to examine the phenomenon of women buying sex from three angles; how society views and treats them, how sex workers consider them as consumers, and how women who buy sex construct their own experiences. The existence, the motivations and, the behaviour of women buying sex in Australia will be questioned in the context of socio-political debates regarding gender, sexuality and power raised in this review of the literature.

Chapter 4

Theory and Methods for Social Analysis

This study uses a polymorphous paradigm underwritten by queer theory and asks about women buying sex. This section details a conscious methodological inquiry investigating possible theory and analytic methods which will address the research questions. This chapter, then, describes the methods for a social analysis, the first of three sub-studies, which exposes some contemporary Australian discourse regarding women buying sex. The social analysis is based on a series of advertisements and related intertexts, in particular, an online newspaper article and associated online comments. The analytical method applied is McKee's (2003) post structural textual analysis.

Theoretical Perspectives

The underlying theoretical perspective of the study leans toward post-structuralism. It draws upon the work of Foucault (G. Rose, 2001), Butler (1999), Hall (2006), Gill (2007a), and Jagose (2010) in acknowledging that the study and all within it operate within structures of society. These structures are reflected in language, are constantly changing, and can be interpreted in any number of ways. Methods to analyse meanings in any text are considered for use in this study through examination of methods which enable deconstruction of the structures of meaning-making. Queer theory has a "tendency to celebrate the crossing of gender boundaries and mixing gender messages as both individually liberating and politically subversive" (Cameron, 2014, pg 242) which aligns with the aims of this project. Butler (2014) describes the possibilities of queer theory to be the ability to break arguments which reduce sexual behaviour to gender binaries and particularly those which are predetermined by forms of hegemonic heterosexuality. Therefore, this thesis considers first gendered norms of behaviour and then seeks experiential challenges to those norms.

One of the problems with investigating sensitive or taboo subjects and experiences, as noted earlier, is that people do not necessarily answer survey questions truthfully, or indeed, participants may make different meanings of their behaviour than survey questions suggest. A large scale survey of women who buy sex was considered inappropriate for this inquiry, especially when information about women buying sex in existing academic literature is insufficient to understand how and which questions might be asked. A decision was made to use qualitative process of in-depth interviews with women who buy sex and other experts in the field. However, interviews with members of the general public about their views about women buying sex would not likely capture broad contemporary debate, meaning an additional method of analysis was required to investigate the social climate in which women buy sex.

Understanding messages in media about women buying sex and audience understandings or readings of these texts is integral to this study. Standard post-structural approaches to media studies which include audience readings are content analysis, ideological critiques and semiotics (Gill, 2007a). Content analysis is useful to reveal patterns in data such as portrayals of gender, however it is a quantitative technique limited to strengthening overall arguments and not to introduce arguments which must come from in-depth analysis. Ideological critique is broad and pervades all research in some way, focusing on the connection between cultural representations and power relations. However, ideological techniques are not considered primary to this study as no specific intention to capitalise on changing gender roles is made.

Semiotic analysis is concerned with meaning-making through signs, found in language and visual representations. Post-structural semiotic methods of analysis include linguistics, discourse analysis and textual analysis (Gill, 2007a). Semiotic methods consider a distinction between the signifier and the signified, and seek to unpack denotive (literal

meaning or first level signification of any particular sign) and connotative (more subtle, second level signification which relies upon cultural codes to interpret) readings. In regards to gendered representations in media, McKee (2003) advises:

If we want to understand the role that the media play in our lives and precisely how its messages participate in the cultural construction of our view of the world, then we have to understand what meanings audiences are making of television programs, films, newspapers, magazines, and radio programs (p. 140).

Thus, examination of media messages about women buying sex, in conjunction with examination of how audiences engage and respond with this media, will provide insight into discourse surrounding women buying sex for this project.

Methods to culturally and historically analyse texts require viewing language as constructive and viewing discourse as a form of action (Gill, 2007a). The specific method adopted for the social analysis part of the study is McKee's post-structural textual analysis (McKee, 2014). McKee explains that "we make educated guesses at the most likely interpretations that might be made" of a particular text (2001, p. 140). It is not necessary or even possible to find the *correct* or *real* interpretation of a text, as there are possibly as many interpretations as there are viewers and consequently, as many versions of reality. The concept of social construction of reality, first introduced by Berger and Luckmann (1967), considers that multiple versions of reality in a society contribute to a more general understanding of roles that become embedded as codes of behaviour. These general understandings of women buying sex will be sought embedded in the discourses found in Australian texts.

Reflecting a break away from literal interpretations of semiotic analysis, McKee's textual analysis (McKee, 2003) considers denotive and connotative levels indistinguishable, due to multiple possible readings of any text. This is exemplified when one considers a picture

of a sunburnt woman with white skin and red hair being pampered in Bali, which places emphasis on white skin and sunburn in a denotative reading. Here, we remember the process of semiotics is necessarily “culture bound” (Gill, 2007a, p. 38). White skinned readers might use connotative signs to interpret the woman as taking white privilege over less fortunate people, yet a Balinese viewer may see the image as a white skinned tourist who is investing in the Balinese tourist industry. Both interpretations are correct, and each reading emphasises different levels of denotative or connotative signs. This example illustrates the importance of understanding the many readings contemporary Australian culture might view women who buy sex, if we are to understand individual experience.

Hall’s (2006) framework of encoding and decoding, also founded on semiotics, was initially considered as a method to analyse texts in media. Hall describes media communications as a process of complex structures “produced and sustained through the articulation of linked but distinctive moments – production, circulation, distribution/consumption, and reproduction” (Hall, 2006, p. 163). He argues that two of the determinate moments in this communicative process are *encoding*, a process of reality construction and maintenance that lies within texts and, *decoding*, which incorporates an understanding of a text and an interpretation and evaluation of its meaning. At the level of the “associative meanings of signs by the encoder, the connotative level, situational ideologies alter and transform signification” (Hall, 2006, p. 168). Therefore, in using this method it is important to examine the encoder’s denotative and connotative meanings as well as the interpretation and consumption (decoding) to understand how audiences translate or transform their interpretations into social practices (Hall, 2006). The influence of Hall’s language of encoding/decoding in conjunction with McKee’s textual analysis was intended to strengthen the case study analysis.

Further to encoding/decoding, Hall's framework is based on an assumption that a dominant meaning of the text is encoded, minimising possible and deliberate conflict within texts (Chandler, 1994). This is the level at which ideologies and discourse intersects, and the active intervention of ideologies can be more clearly seen in and on discourse (Hall, 2006). Hall's method seemed appropriate until the particular texts were selected for analysis. At this point, the first text, an advertisement for car insurance, contained apparent deliberate ambiguity, creating humour, and making Hall's methods unworkable for this text. No single *truth* about the producers intended meaning could be established. McKee (2003)'s textual analysis, which examines many potential meanings of audience interpretations, was determined to be the best way of seeking the dominance of particular meanings, while still providing a framework for rigorous analysis. In this way, researcher bias and any difficulties of determining a dominant hegemonic meaning solely within a particular text, as Hall's framework has also been criticized for, are avoided (Chandler, 1994).

The social analysis section of this study aims to describe the dominance of particular audience readings about female sexual agency and women buying sex. Due to critique of Hall's concept of dominant hegemonic meanings, I examine some understandings of the concept of hegemony and consider how it may be used in this study.

Dominant Hegemony or Dominant Discourse

The idea of hegemony has evolved from meaning a governing leadership in previous centuries, to a more subtle description of cultural dominance today. Gramsci, a Marxist philosopher, developed the theory of cultural hegemony to describe the ruling dominance through the acceptance of a particular set of beliefs, values and mores to be considered the social norm. Gramsci's hegemony is not simply an issue of social control, it is a process of large-scale historical change, in which dominant ideology becomes the accepted worldview (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). There remains some controversy about the broader use of

the term hegemony and the relationship with political and post-structural opinion. For example, theorists Butler, Laclau and Zizek argue that capitalism is either a primary structure enabling culture, or that new social movements rearticulate a hegemonic culture as a struggle against a primary structure, with or without a stable continuity (Butler, Laclau, & Zizek, 2000). Tensions regarding the use of words such as hegemony to describe a cultural dominance, appear to be the same tensions seen in specific language used in social theory, sociology, cultural theory and structural theory (Butler et al., 2000). Butler describes hegemony as dynamic rearticulation of social norms (Butler et al., 2000), allowing for cultural change with a complicity to continue the apparent status quo.

Hall's approach to hegemony has been read as either state domination and power or ideological discourse (Wood, 1998). This study sits in the middle, being more concerned with how the community, and not the State, contrives to define, control, maintain and challenge female gender roles. People in the community are not passive recipients of encoded messages through media, and no text or advertisement can satisfy all viewers' culturally specific experiences, memories, or desires, meaning that a dominant hegemonic meaning is only the preferred reading that seems natural for the culture (Chandler, 1994). Hegemony as used in this study attempts to determine the reading of the texts that most of the audience would consider to be *common sense*.

This common sense approach fits the subject of female sexual agency more broadly because, when hegemony is reduced to a model of cultural control the possibility of cultural change is not recognized (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). In an analysis of hegemonic masculinity, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) included blurring of behaviours and norms, and considered differences in power amongst men and, looked for possibilities in change in men's conduct (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Aware of the contested concept of hegemony, they crafted a reformulation of hegemonic masculinity in contemporary terms

(Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). They came to understand that despite diverse sex roles, hegemony was not necessarily achieved through violence or overt power but through persuasion in culture and institutions (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Hall's (2006) method of searching for hegemonic dominance in cultural studies seeks to find the narratives that drive a society toward a perceived universally valid and dominant ideology which justifies social, political, economic and sexual behaviour. In this way, analysis of errant social behaviour, such as women buying sex, will consider the effects upon hegemonic discourse of women as passive receivers of sex to allow the possibility of cultural change with regards to how people view femininity.

This thesis examines the concept of culturally dominant femininity and draws upon scholarship regarding the concept of masculinity. In his critique of hegemonic masculinity, Demetriou (2001) identifies an external hegemony, referring to the institutionalization of male dominance, and an internal hegemony referring to social dominance of some men over others. External hegemony, or structures of power that affect cultural preference in ideology about the sex industry, include capitalism, patriarchy, conservative, religious, feminist and political structures. Some of these are examined as they emerge from the data with particular attention focused on how these structures influence notions of expected female sexual behaviour. Internal hegemony as social dominance is illustrated in this case study through analysis of audience engagement and their views of femininity.

This thesis examines discourse surrounding commercial sex and female sexuality, and identifies dominant themes. McKee (2003) points out "audience research does not find out 'reality'; it analyses and produces more texts" (p. 141). For this reason, McKee prefers Foucault's language of dominant discourse over a more unitary hegemony, which enables the structural powers which contributes to meaning-making to be contextualised from the

audience meanings. The remainder of this chapter outlines the process of seeking dominant and other discourse through the use of McKee's textual analysis.

Textual Analysis

The first step in textual analysis is to find texts which might answer the question of what contemporary Australians think about women buying sex. Then, unpacking elements which might contribute to audience interpretations such as economic advantage, holiday disinhibition, gender and race. One of the advantages of textual analysis is in selecting various texts to investigate audience interpretations, including naturally occurring materials. In addition, a researcher tendency of handling individual texts as though they were isolated from other influences is avoided by the use of intertexts from newspapers, magazine articles and blog sites to illustrate various influences upon social mores. That is to say, the use of intertexts broaden the contextual framework in which audience interpretation occurs (McKee, 2003). One of the main intertexts used in this analysis is an online article about the advertisements and accompanying audience comments. The audience commentary is an important example of *convergence*, a term coined by Jenkins (2006) who notes that media producers and consumers now interact with each other in a participatory culture. Notions of audiences as passive spectators of media have been replaced with notions of collective audience conversation and is increasingly valued by the media industry (Jenkins, 2006).

Textual analysis is a subjective methodology. It requires intimate knowledge of the culture in question, and the multiple discourses of the culture, in order to make educated guesses at the likely interpretations that audiences make (McKee, 2003). Unlike other scientific methods of analysis such as content analysis, post-structural textual analysis does not produce quantifiable data and is not replicable. Thus, different researchers using the same texts will produce different textual analysis results. Seeking truth is not the aim, rather a textual analysis will present some contemporary discourse about women buying sex, via

educated guesses which are meticulously illustrated through examples in the examined texts. McKee's textual analysis does not attempt to analyse the texts as stand-alone works of art, but to use a post-structuralist approach to take the necessary information from any text in order to consider practices of sense-making in audiences of specific cultures (McKee, 2003).

Selected texts.

A series of popular Australian Associated Motor Insurers Limited (AAMI) car insurance advertisements tell a story of an Australian woman, Rhonda, who holidays to Bali and has a relationship with Ketut, a cocktail waiter. Although an unlikely interpretation of the events intended by the producers, the relationship of Rhonda and Ketut, the fictional characters in the advertisements, was framed as sex tourism in other texts published in media and social media. The six advertisements aired on Australian television from 2011 – 2014 were supported by a multi-media campaign involving radio, sporting events and online media. The AAMI advertisement series present an ideal study in Australian culture regarding sex and gender roles because “production was responsive to consumer involvement”, according to Richard Riboni, the executive marketing manager at AAMI at the Mumbrella360 conference³ (2013). In addition, the AAMI advertisements utilised humorous depictions of gender roles, ideas of romance and sexuality, consumerism and racial power, and were highly successful in terms of popularity with the Australian public. Popularity as a measure of success also infers influence. Advertising, the economy of the media, is said to be as influential to society as education and organized religion (Gill, 2007a). An important resource for popularity, maintains Gill (2007a), is humour which is often grounded in gender ideology. The deep social assumptions we take for granted about gender are often embedded in advertising which saturate our lives (G. Rose, 2001).

³ The Mumbrella360 conference is a discussion of Australian media and marketing.

The meaning of the relationship between Rhonda and Ketut was ambiguous, prompting the public to amplify “the sexual tension” through social media (Anonymous Facebook page, 2013), stimulating debate about sex and romance tourism and women buying sex in general. The sexual tension reached a peak after the first four advertisements were aired, when a campaign website was created to encourage audience engagement with Rhonda and Ketut’s relationship through the introduction of a contender for Rhonda’s love, Trent Toogood (M. Miller, 2013). The last two advertisements were produced as a result of the 88,000 viewers who voted for “Team Ketut” via the campaign’s website (Miller, 2013), thus illustrating the depth of consumer engagement. Further, Miller (2013) stated that catchphrases such as “Hot like a sunrise” entered popular vernacular and the campaign was mentioned in more than 1.3 million newsfeed items.

One of the intertexts for this study is an opinion piece by Bowen (2013), published in Australian Broadcasting Corporation’s (ABC) *The DRUM*. Bowen, a freelance journalist with a background of writing for several Australian newspapers and magazines, labelled the AAMI advertisements to be about female sex tourism. Of all the newsfeed items about the AAMI advertisements, Bowen’s was chosen for this study as it acted as a catalyst for discussion about Australian female sex tourism. In response to the article, the audience generated 364 comments in 72 hours, when comments closed, and all of these comments are used in the study as units for thematic analysis within the textual analysis.

Audience comments.

Online opinion journalism accompanied with space for audience comments provides readers with opportunities for diverse and authentic public conversation. An emerging concept for describing social environments which Bruns (2008) terms as *produsage*, examines the way in which an audience interacts with a product (such as an advertisement) through news and social media. Bruns (2008) considers that participation in online discussion

“removes the real-world limitations placed on social and/or collaborative behaviour by factors such as language, geography, background, and financial status” (p. 3), providing a possibility of a generalised sense-making from a variety of sub-cultures. McKee (2003) explains the use of extant text, or unsolicited data, is that created for a purpose other than research, eliminates participant bias and recovers publicly available knowledge. These concepts are particularly useful for the examination of a wide variety of contemporary discourse in potentially stigmatising topics such as sexual practises.

Some online research has been criticised for its inability to validate the genuineness of the text (Gaiser & Schreiner, 2009). However, Eysenbach and Till (2001) consider, “the internet is the most comprehensive electronic archive of written material representing our world and peoples’ opinions, concerns, and desires” (p. 1103). Additionally, online discussion has been described as a “third space betwixt and between the public and private spheres” allowing imagined intimacy and the possibility of transcending politically correct discourse required in other realms (Hughey & Daniels, 2013, p. 336). The authenticity of online comments cannot be guaranteed, however this digital curation can collectively present itself as a new text, worthy of analysis. In a study of racism in Australia, Due (2011) used online comments as units of analysis and noted:

comments left by the general public in response to news items allow for an insight into public opinion surrounding a topic that, though obviously not able to be generalised to all people involved, nevertheless does provide a reflection of public sentiment (Due, 2011, p. 42).

Therefore the multiple possible interpretations made by the general public in texts for this analysis provide a reflection of public sentiment.

The use of peoples’ online text requires minimal ethical concern for this project. Ethical considerations regarding the use of data collected on the internet have been guided by

the Association of Internet Research paper “Ethical decision-making and internet research” (Markham & Buchanan, 2012). The comments used in analysis for this project have been written by human subjects, however application to the Human Research Ethics Committee of UNSW is not applicable because the human subjects are represented as publically available text and, it is assumed that participants posted comments knowing their content to be public particularly as most participants chose pen names (or aliases) and they are unlikely to be personally identified. Section 5.1.22 (b) of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research confirms this social analysis to be exempt from review (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2015). Further, analysis of their commentary and publication of results are unlikely to result in harm to participants. The use of public commentary ensures the study will not describe a single subjective point of view, but will examine the way in which the general public interacted with the online social environment to reveal discourse about women buying sex (Wodak & Meyer, 2002).

Textual analysis techniques.

The AAMI advertisements are examined in three levels of context; the rest of the text (for example, consider the meaning of Rhonda’s character development over the series of advertisements), the genre of the text (for example, examination of the codes that signify the advertisements as light-hearted and funny), and the context of the circulation of the text (the production and distribution) (McKee, 2003). This study is concerned with the nature of the relationship between Rhonda and Ketut thus, questions are asked of the text and *signs* are identified as possible representations of gender, race, economic and social status, romantic narrative, humour, and holiday behaviour.

The content and the language used in the audience commentary is then analysed thematically to find audience opinions about issues related to sex tourism such as female

sexuality and women buying sex. Media intertexts, and specifically non-academic discourse, are used together with verbatim quotes from the data, to support the analysis.

McKee (2003) explains how lived experience of a culture can often make invisible discourses which are taken for granted or thought of as common sense. These invisible discourses can be missed during thematic analysis which considers literal meaning on words and phrases. Therefore, during textual analysis the following three techniques have been used to consider meanings of texts and to challenge thinking beyond the verbatim:

- Exnomination, *outside of naming*, involves challenging dominant ideas that become so obvious that they do not warrant our attention. For example, flagging the term *Asian tourist*, or indeed *female sex tourist*, when the ethnicity or gender of the tourist is not important to the meaning of the text, and the specific ethic or gender inference suggests an additional meaning.
- Commutation uses gender role reversing, or swapping two areas of culture (e.g. sex with food) in the text to see if it would have the same impact. N. Bowen (2013) provides an example of using commutation when he suggested that middle aged, overweight Ron might have a romantic encounter with a young and beautiful Balinese woman.
- Structuring absences, a technique to seek certain kinds of representation that might be deliberately excluded from texts. In this analysis of advertisements about a possible romantic relationship, it is the absence of explicit signs to define the relationship which creates space for audiences to use their own conditions of perceptions (past knowledge and experience) to construct the meaning of the relationship.

Bringing this all together, public discourse about gender, sexuality and power, and specifically about women buying sex, are examined. The results illustrate a diversity of

public discourse regarding the intersection of individual social reality with popular fictional media.

Chapter 5

Contemporary Australian Views about Female Sexual Agency and Buying Sex

The question guiding the textual analysis presented in this chapter asks, “what are some of the contemporary Australian views about female sexual agency and capacity to buy sex?” The starting point is a highly successful advertising campaign for car insurance, AAMI’s “Rhonda” series (Marketing, 2014), which was interpreted by some audience members to be a portrayal of female sex tourism. The first section of this chapter explores contemporary popular discourse about female sexuality through examination of signs found in the advertisements. The second section broadens the study to examine related texts, or intertexts, with a focus on an article written by freelance journalist Nigel Bowen and published in *The Drum* on 22 January 2013, in which Bowen states the meaning of Rhonda’s relationship to be female sex tourism (2013). The results of thematic analysis of online comments in response to Bowen comprise the final section of this chapter where multiple audience readings are visible.

AAMI Advertisement Series “Rhonda”

The series comprise of six advertisements televised in Australia, which depict an Australian woman engaging in an undefined relationship with a Balinese man, Ketut. The series is examined in relation to the context of its distribution, such as how it was presented to the Australian public, to explain the settings in which the series was received. Next, the text surrounding the relationship of Rhonda and Ketut and the genre of the text are deconstructed to seek signs of a sexual relationship. Then, possible interpretations and meanings as to the nature of the relationship are identified through potential signs within the text. Identification of these signs expose gender stereotypes underlying the social settings within which, female sexuality is performed.

Content and context of distribution.

Produced by Ogilvy, “Rhonda”, is a series of Australian car insurance advertisements televised from 2011 to 2014. In addition to AAMI’s “Rhonda” series of advertising, there have been over 1.3 million more discussions in media, estimated at \$1.5 million of free public relations (M. Miller, 2013), and AAMI sponsored media designed to keep the conversation about Rhonda and Ketut in mainstream Australian awareness. Examples include, “Who’s right for Rhonda?” webpage (AAMI, 2013), additional videos creating back story (Burrowes, 2013), and entertainment news articles (Ash, 2013; Baxter, 2013; Young, 2013). The volume of media and density of public engagement with social media exemplifies a high level of penetration of the Rhonda series in Australian social settings.

The series of six consecutive advertisements is described in depth in Appendix C. This section provides a précis of the series in order to set the scene and provide background to analysis of audience discussion about the advertisements:

- 2011: *Applause*. Rhonda, an Australian car-insurance customer is publically congratulated by everyone, everywhere, for being a safe driver.
- 2012: *Bali, Massage*. Rhonda travels to Bali on the savings she has made by being a safe driver with AAMI.
- 2012: *Bali, Sunglasses*. Rhonda is served by a local hotel manager Ketut when “sexual tension” is developed (Anonymous, 2013).
- 2012: *Claim Assist App*. Rhonda returns to Australia and tells a friend about her romance.
- 2013: *Rhonda’s Reunion*. Rhonda expects Ketut to arrive at her school reunion but he does not, so she leaves with Trent Toogood.
- 2014: *Finale*. Ketut arrives late at the school reunion and finds Rhonda’s anklet. Rhonda returns for the anklet and finds Ketut.

The first question of concern to textual analysis regards the significance of using the selected text. In this case, I ask, why did audiences engage with the Rhonda series. Miller (2013) argues that the success of the “Rhonda” AAMI advertising campaign was due to the character development and social media response and engagement. Baldan, a senior copywriter at Ogilvy, said, “people are looking for a story. We can give them one in 30 seconds. Sure, we are wrapping it around insurance, but it’s through engagement with a story” (Anonymous, 2013)⁴. It would be speculative to presume the intention of Ogilvy in this advertising campaign as anything other than attempting to catch audience attention, however the series did spark debate revealing Australian understanding about female sexuality.

McEwan, the general manager of Ogilvy Australia, noted that the campaign was not planned as a series of six advertisements, but designed to be “nimble and flexible” and having the ability to adapt to feedback from the general public (Anonymous, 2013). One of the biggest driving forces of the campaign was the use of social media, for which the marketing team takes “no official credit” (Burrowes, 2013). Consequently, Ogilvy took *no official responsibility* to the increasing and passionate mainstream social media speculation about Rhonda and Ketut as participants in sex tourism. Facebook pages such as “the sexual tension between Rhonda and Ketut” suggested possible scenarios for the completion of the story that were considered by the team at Ogilvy (Anonymous Facebook page, 2013). Looking at the social media response, it is clear that there was public encouragement for a happy ending to Rhonda and Ketut’s relationship. The demand that Rhonda and Ketut’s relationship needed to be based on *true love* suggested that there were signifiers of sex tourism in the relationship that needed to be addressed, and the final two advertisements, *Rhonda’s Reunion* (2013) and

⁴ The focus of AAMI advertising since 2008 has been to convince people that buying AAMI insurance would save money, underlining the competitiveness of their pricing (Thinktv, 2008), until the Rhonda advertisements which extended the principle to spending money saved.

Finale (2014), deterred further interpretations of sex tourism. Although these advertisements are not primarily about sex tourism they direct audiences to draw on their understandings of female sexual agency and sex tourism, if not through experience, then through available familiar and mainstream discourse. It must be remembered that car insurance advertisements are produced to sell car insurance. The millions of social media engagements and multiple interpretations of the advertisements and clear culturally preferred ending of them, provide this thesis with a text in which the level of Australian's acceptance, understanding and tolerance of sex tourism can be explored.

The *love story* of Rhonda and Ketut was not merely a romantic undercurrent; it was appealing to the Australian sense of humour. Rhonda, portrayed as ordinary, is bestowed with unlikely celebrity status, possibly engaging with common fantasies of fame. Also unlikely, she travels solo overseas to meet a younger, attentive man in Bali, appealing to exotic romantic fantasy. Rhonda behaves as if she is unaccustomed to being waited on, possibly misinterpreting gestures of servitude for flattery. Giving the series a political twist, Rhonda's red hair and possibly her heavier appearance, were not dissimilar to the Australian Prime Minister at the time, Julia Gillard. The idea of a Prime Minister flirting with a cocktail waiter is also regarded as humorous. The success of the advertising series was due to creating humour, primarily around gender and travel. In this case, Rhonda's perceived sexual agency, or not, is depicted in a way that creates comic tension. If the event of Rhonda's female sexual agency is unlikely and humorous in Australian society, then analysis of audience response rests on the audience's potential disbelief of the possibility of female sexual agency.

The following sections detail the particular signs in the advertisements of Rhonda's power, sexual agency and, exotic romantic fantasy. Obvious and dominant signs identified are considered through McKee's exnomination test to challenge our expected gender norms and further tested through the use of the commutation test which swaps two areas of culture

such as gender role reversing (McKee, 2003). More subtle signs are sought in the advertisements through the use of McKee's structuring absences test (McKee, 2003).

What signs indicate Rhonda's power?

Skin colour is a sign of difference in the social construction of race. Rhonda's sunburn in *Sunglasses* (2012) emphasises her white skin and gives a possible double intention to Ketut's flirtation of, "you look hot today, Rhonda". Rhonda enjoys the privilege of international travel despite the depiction of her work as being an average clerical position. In contrast, international travel is beyond the means of similarly skilled and employed workers in Bali. Rhonda is shown to be enjoying common tourist pursuits in Bali including foot massage, hair braiding, and drinking cocktails from deck chairs on the beach. Exotic appeal is bestowed on Ketut with his traditional attire, accent, and broken English. In this setting, Rhonda experiences white privilege and the economic power associated with it.

Rhonda's unlikely celebrity status affords her power due to being socially desirable. Rhonda is portrayed as a celebrity in *Applause* (2011) in which a voice-over narrative, explains that Rhonda has become a celebrity due to her safe driver record. In *Bali: Massage* (2012) Rhonda receives overly enthusiastic attention from the masseurs and Ketut. This status, due only to safe driving, creates humour and emphasises her ordinariness. Rhonda responds to the female masseurs cautiously, trying to dismiss them, and consequently sets up a heterosexual schema. Her ongoing relationship with Ketut, confirms a heterosexual context and signals Rhonda as socially desirable, therefore, holding power.

What are the signs that indicate Rhonda's sexual agency?

A woman travelling alone indicates female empowerment and possibly an opportunity for intimate relationships. Signs of Rhonda traveling alone include her own narrative in *Massages* (2012). Rhonda is having a foot massage on a beach chair in Bali when she says "AAMI's safe driver rewards took me here. I can now indulge in a few more pleasures".

McKee's (2003) commutation test of gender swapping demonstrates no sexual inference with the masseur. Had Rhonda said, she *indulged in a few more pleasures*, while smiling into the eyes of a male foot masseur, a possible sexual relationship would be inferred, particularly as the masseur says "beautiful brake foot". Thus, *Massages* (2012) establishes Rhonda as a solo heterosexual traveller available for pleasurable activities.

The servitude of the female foot masseur in *Massages* (2012) through the masseur's business-like behaviour and Rhonda's discomfort contrasts with that of Ketut in *Sunglasses* (2012). In *Sunglasses*, Ketut, a presumed male cocktail waiter, brings Rhonda a drink with flirtatious eye contact which implies Rhonda is receiving special attention and a potential relationship is developing. By performing a commutation test on *Sunglasses* (2012) and substituting Ketut for a female cocktail waitress, we notice that a female serving Rhonda drinks with smirks and winks is neither funny nor believable based on previous heterosexual indicators. In addition, after giving Rhonda the cocktail in *Sunglasses* (2012) Ketut says, "you look so hot today Rhonda". She giggles and he adds, "hot like a sunrise". Ketut winks and erects a sun umbrella to protect Rhonda from the sun. Possible interpretations are that Ketut is flirting by complimenting Rhonda on her good looks or mocking Rhonda's sunburnt face. Either way, Rhonda's satisfied expression suggests that Ketut's behaviour is pleasing to her.

What are the signs of exotic romantic fantasy or sexual relationship?

Certain holidays, such as those at tropical beach settings, are typically considered as destinations for romance. Sex is integral to tourist experience, explains Berdychesky et al. (2013), due to the inclusion in the four S's – sun, sea, sand, and sex – the hallmarks used in marketing tourist destinations. Signs which indicate the possibility of a sexual relationship between Rhonda and Ketut include that in *Claim Assist* (2012), in which Rhonda's friend asks, "any holiday romances? Did you get lucky?" The two questions appear the same yet

romance may not include sex and *lucky* implies sex. Rhonda's answer is, "well... there was this one guy...", which does not clearly answer either question. However, her smug expression indicates there is a sense of personal satisfaction or a desire to exaggerate her sexual fantasy. Further, as Rhonda replays scenes of *Sunglasses* (2012) the screen shot is blurred and she is richly dressed and lying upon a luxurious bed on the beach. Additional shots include sexual caresses and details of Ketut's "musculature, rippling", creating a dream-like sequence.

The *Claim Assist* (2012) advertisement creates a moment of ambiguity, where the audience can speculate about the underlying basis or motivation for Rhonda and Ketut's relationship. A structuring absences test reveals AAMI's use of a vague and dream-like sequence regarding Rhonda's recreation of her encounter with Ketut to be ambiguous between fantasy or a possible memory of a sexual relationship. Obvious scenes depicting sexual relationship leave nothing to the imagination, do not create humour and, most importantly, they do not present the audience with a conundrum worthy of discussion. The moment of ambiguity creates room for different interpretations of the relationship by the audience, and this is dependent on conditions of perception.

What are the audience readings of Rhonda and Ketut's relationship?

Consideration of the different conditions of perception that people hold, based on life experiences, are a key feature of textual analysis (McKee, 2001). In addition to life experience, conditions of perception are affected by degrees of engagement or symmetry/asymmetry established with the product (McKee, 2003). Thus, audience members who like and accept the character of Rhonda as an average Australian (symmetry to the product), who have not been exposed to the idea of female sex tourism and believe that sex and love should be synonymous (conditions of perception), are likely to interpret the relationship of Rhonda and Ketut as true love or romantic fantasy despite an infinite number

of interpretations. Alternatively, audience members who like Rhonda and have been exposed to the idea of female sex tourism may excuse Rhonda's behaviour as holiday exuberance and not her usual style.

Numerous signs in the advertisements indicate Rhonda's social, ethnic and economic capital up to and including the *Claim Assist* (2012) advertisement. The use of McKee's exnomination test to focus on ethnicity, reveals the advertisement's presentation of an Australian woman having a romantic encounter with an attractive, young, Balinese man, is a portrayal of an ethnic and economically discordant couple. Couples with large differences in socially defined attractiveness are not regarded as common or without suspicion. A commutation test posits a gender swap with an Australian male character in Bali having a relationship with a younger and more attractive woman, would prompt the Australian public to more readily consider an economic relationship (sex tourism). Moreover, AAMI did briefly consider a male character for Rhonda (depicted as Ron) (Anonymous, 2013) but rejected the idea. Therefore, unequal power relations of ethnic or economic basis can be more easily overlooked, excused or minimised for women than men. Meaning, gender power or the perception of one's sexual agency, weighs heavier than perceived racial or economic power in unequal relations.

The audience response to these signs of unequal power relations were the subject of a post-campaign analysis by a staff writer of *Marketing*, an online marketing magazine, who spoke of the audience response to the anonymous Facebook page, "the sexual tension between Rhonda & Ketut"⁵. The analysis stated, "it became obvious that Australians were asking for more. And hence the love story of Rhonda and Ketut began..." (Marketing, 2014). Subsequently, and possibly in response to sex tourism speculation, a further advertisement to *Claim Assist - Rhonda's Reunion* (2012), introduced a contender for Rhonda's love, Trent

⁵ The Facebook page had over 100,000 likes in one week and was created just after the *Claim Assist* advertisement. The page has since been removed.

Toogood. The intertext, “*who’s right for Rhonda?*” (AAMI, 2013) an interactive website, set a battle between Ketut, who represented a real and lasting relationship or true love with Rhonda, and Trent Toogood, who represented an estrangement with Ketut, meaning that Rhonda’s prior relationship with Ketut was either fantasy or casual (or commercial) sex. Just over 100,000 viewers voted for either scenario with Ketut receiving over 88,000 votes (M. Miller, 2013).

The subsequent advertisements satisfy audience demand for a true love outcome through, *Rhonda’s Reunion* (2013) where Rhonda returns home to Australia grieving the loss of Ketut, and *Finale* (2014) when Rhonda and Ketut are reunited in Australia. Meanwhile, the portrayal of Ketut as a cocktail waiter in the television advertisements is upgraded to hotel manager only in the *Rhonda goes to Bali – Behind the Scenes* (2012) story published by AAMI online⁶. Upon return to Australia the exotic Balinese location, racial differences and economic inequities depicted in the previous advertisements are erased. Ketut’s entrance saves Rhonda from making an implied incorrect choice of Trent Toogood, and from having a fantasy, casual or commercial relationship with Ketut. In addition to their newfound equality, traditional gender roles are established. Rhonda allows herself to be *chosen* and Ketut’s masculinity as a pursuer remains intact.

The deconstruction of the signs in the advertisements and consideration of audience responses influencing the conclusion of the series suggest a culturally dominant interpretation of Rhonda and Ketut’s relationship (and other similar relationships) was that of true love. True love, represented the preferred cultural order, although this meaning of Rhonda’s relationship was not univocal or uncontested. Miller (2013) also noted that the two advertisements created after *Claim Assist* strengthen a preferred meaning of true love. Thus, four major interpretations are:

⁶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QjMnqa_tqmc&index=2&list=RD85ubtVs5n6A

1. True love - the most dominant, culturally preferred interpretation.
2. Fantasy - Another reading of the relationship might be to minimise, ignore or misinterpret signs of Rhonda's reciprocation to Ketut's flirtations, and accept only obviously narrated signs of Rhonda's fantasy.
3. Sex - An alternative reading may consider that Rhonda and Ketut had a sexual relationship that was based on mutual attraction, ignoring the likely economic and racial inequities.
4. Sex tourism - other readers may situate the message of the relationship within racial and economic power relations and conclude that a commercial sexual relationship is probable.

In addition to highlighting true love as a culturally preferred relationship style, textual analysis of the advertising series has methodically documented signs of Rhonda's sexual agency and power to demonstrate the similarities with a situation of female sex tourism. Journalist Nigel Bowen supports an argument for the relationship as a depiction of sex tourism, in his article "Rhonda and Ketut as the faces of female sex tourism" (N. Bowen, 2013). The second section of this analysis examines Bowen's article as an intertext to the AAMI series, including a description of audience comments.

Bowen's Article – Rhonda and Ketut as the Faces of Female Sex Tourism

Bowen's article was published on the website of *The Drum*, an ABC website with an accompanying television program, in January 2013 (N. Bowen, 2013). The timing is relevant as the article was published during the moment of ambiguity of the AAMI advertisements, after the *Claim Assist* (September 2012) and before the final two advertisements in the series (August 2013, January 2014). Bowen's interpretation of Rhonda and Ketut's relationship as sex tourism prompted passionate audience discussion in the form of comments posted directly to the ABC website with the article. The number of hits on this particular article is

not possible to access, but 4.6 million users visit the main ABC news site each month (ABC, 2014a). *The Drum* publishes “robust opinion from some of the country’s leading thinkers and writers” and provides a platform for public debate (ABC, 2014b).

In his article, Bowen states he has personally witnessed Australian women with Indonesian gigolos in Bali. Bowen’s personal experiences contribute to his *condition of perception* for interpretation of the Rhonda advertisements and his evocative description places his audience in the Balinese environment and increases the authenticity of his claims. N. Bowen (2013) argues that only a small number of women attempt to buy sex but a very large number enjoy the idea of living vicariously through “fiction and now, car insurance advertisements”.

Bowen points out a double standard in the treatment of male and female sex tourists. Sex tourism “can’t be the subject of feel-good rom-coms and corporate advertising when it’s women doing it but an occasion for sickened outrage when it’s men” (N. Bowen, 2013). Bowen also notes a cultural intolerance of men who participate in sex tourism and invites us to question, “sex tourism is either exploitative or it isn’t” (N. Bowen, 2013).

Audience commentary to Bowen’s article.

Bowen’s audience included 145 contributors who wrote 364 comments in 72 hours after the article was posted. A majority of 95 contributors made only a single comment. Five contributors made more than ten comments, and one contributor made 34 comments. Each comment was displayed with the date and time it was posted, as well as the author’s pseudonym. The website displays conversations in online comments as threads. For this analysis, each comment was chronologically allocated a number for ease of data management, to eliminate possible identification due to some contributors using legal names, and to avoid possible bias for pseudonyms that have potential value laden meanings (such as “politically incorrect”, and “feminine hypocrisy”). An Excel spreadsheet was created with

each comment number, comment date and time of posting, author, position taken on Rhonda and Ketut's relationship, opinions about sex work or sex tourism, and the comment in full. A listing of the first 50 comments is available at Appendix D.

The questions asked in the textual analysis regard the audience's opinions about the recognition of females being sex tourists and double standards of behaviour for male and female sex tourists. Results are discussed using additional examples provided by intertexts in other media to contextualise various arguments.

Results of Analysis of Comments

A thematic analysis was performed on the commentary to Bowen's article where comments on the excel spreadsheet were organised into themes. Using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis as a guide, first level themes were those deductive to the data through asking questions and second level themes were those which emerged as an inductive approach as the strength of data developed in each theme. Questioning the data led to the first level themes which address the opinions of Bowen's audience about whether females participate in sex tourism and double standards of gendered behaviour. Second level themes, those which were of most interest to the commentators, regarded opinions about sex tourism as racist and the sex industry as exploitative or as a form of work.

After reading Bowen's article, and in contrast to the general audience of the AAMI advertisements, contributors were more likely than the general public to accept the relationship of Rhonda and Ketut as participating in sex tourism (58) than not (32). Although 25 contributors described sex as work or fair trade, 26 contributors described those who sell sex in tourism to be exploited. Eighteen people who acknowledged sex tourism as likely also described the sex industry as exploitation. Forty contributors acknowledged sex tourism as likely and did not describe the sex industry as exploitation. Table 5.1, below, illustrates the

topics that were discussed in the commentary and the numbers of contributors who expressed similar attitudes. These findings are discussed in their relevant sections.

Table 5.1

Concepts in the Data

Sex Work	Sex workers	Sex Tourism
Fair trade (13)	are victims (11)	uses a double standard (61) is exploitation (26)
Work (12)	FSW are victims but MSW are empowered (4)	is a racial not gender issue (3)
Ok only for disabled (2)	spread STIs/HIV (4) SW clients are victims (1)	MST are violent (2) ST is foreign aid* (1)

Note: F/MSW = female/male sex workers, F/M/ST = female/male/sex tourists

* the concept of tourist money contributing to local cash economy.

Recognition of female sex tourism.

A lack of formal definition of female sex tourism in academia, media or in the online social environment under analysis, contributes to the idea that female sex tourism does not occur, as supported by personal perceptions, essentialist notions of gendered behaviour, and moral stances. Alternative ideas suggest that female sex tourism does occur but with minimal consequence on the actors or the wider community. The intersection of the interpretations of the Rhonda advertisements and Bowen's article, exposes some of the dominant discourses about female sex tourism and demonstrates techniques people use to define sex tourism in ways that confirm their moral understandings.

Within the theme of female sex tourism, the textual analysis question asked, what were the dominant discourses about Rhonda and the understandings of female sex tourism. Possible interpretations of the meanings of Rhonda's relationship were used as a reflection of the acceptance of the phenomenon of female sex tourism. Each comment in response to Bowen's article was examined for opinions about Rhonda and Ketut's relationship, or opinions on similar types of relationships. Multiple comments from single contributors were

verified to confirm one consistent viewpoint. This analysis revealed the four major positions to be:

- True love, four contributors stated that the relationship was based on honest affection and furthermore, female sex tourism does not happen.
- Fantasy, 17 contributors felt that Rhonda and Ketut did not have sex.
- Casual sex, 11 contributors felt that they did have sex but it was situational and non-commercial.
- Sex tourism, 58 contributors explicitly acknowledged that Rhonda and Ketut were likely participating in female sex tourism, which does happen.

It might appear that the largest number of people commenting on Bowen's article agreed with his interpretation of the meaning of the relationship between Rhonda and Ketut as sex tourism, thereby appearing to challenge the dominance of the true love discourse found in analysis of the AAMI advertisements. However, these comments were made *before* the final two Rhonda advertisements that resolve the ambiguity in the relationship. Therefore, a greater number of contributors in response to Bowen's influential article in 2013 describing Rhonda as a sex tourist, does not overturn the culturally preferred reading of Rhonda's true love made by the Australian public in response to a preferred ending of the Rhonda advertisements. Not all contributors indicated an overall opinion as to the meaning of the relationship, or acknowledged the possibility of female sex tourism, as many individual comments were based on threads regarding commercial sex in general or were off-topic.

Various definitions of female sex tourism were used and illustrate a resistance against the idea of a double standard by contributors who argued that women could not or would not buy sex. The techniques used to define female sex tourism and thus minimise or deny, were somewhat similar to those found by Due (2011) who examined four techniques that are used to deny racism found in online comments regarding a racist incident:

- The first technique, positive self-presentation, was apparent when contributors to Bowen's article used personal experience to emphasise their behaviour as typical and non-threatening to expected gender norms.
- The second technique of denying or trivialising the seriousness of an incident, was used by contributors through arguments of low prevalence of women buying sex compared with men to infer women buying sex were unimportant.
- Reversing the incident by making targets of the dominant group was a technique used by contributors to conflate men's sex tourist behaviour with violence.
- The last technique, denial of intent, was used by contributors when they presented arguments about women desiring love or romance over sex.

Evidence of contributors using these methods to explain or refuse to recognise female sex tourism are presented in the following four sections.

Defining sex tourism by personal experience.

Personal perceptions based on experience can be used to present evidence that "any reasonable person" would agree with (McKee, 2001), such as comment 354, "I know personally a number of men who have paid for sex, both here and overseas, I've never met a single woman who has done the same." It is unclear how many men or women contributor of comment 354 knows, or if they had directly asked their acquaintances about their commercial sex use but the most likely interpretation of the comment is that if they are not aware of female sex tourism and therefore assume it does not commonly occur. The opinion rests on their condition of perception, or personal experience. Alternative experiences were demonstrated, such as in comment 53, "I take it you haven't been to PNG and seen the larger white Australian women chasing...".

Defining sex tourism by scale.

The scale of women buying sex is discussed in a newspaper article by feminist writer Tankard Reist (2010). She wrote, “hiring prostitutes remains fundamentally a male preserve, which is why we don't see huge line-ups of women wanting to buy the bodies of boys and men”. Similarly, public discussion in response to the Bowen article debated the concept of scale. For example, comment 151, “besides, the numbers of female sex tourists are absolutely miniscule compared to the male counterparts. As long as the female version is in the stark minority, it will be tolerated more.” In addition, comment 355 suggested a possible reason for low rates of women buying sex, “male sex drives tend to be higher than female ones (or perhaps you could say differently engaged) and thus the sex industry is unlikely to interest the same proportion of female consumers as male ones”. There are no empirical data about rates of female sex tourists compared with males to challenge these beliefs. However, a local paper in Jamaica quoted that about 80,000 tourist women travel to Jamaica each year with the purpose of engaging in sex tourism (unknown, 2013). Similarly, an Indonesian publication states that “throngs of foreign single women” come to Bali for the same (Campbell, 2013). Arguments of scale narrowly define female sex tourism, and label limited evidence as errant, of no consequence and worthy of no further investigation. Arguments of scale, suspend engagement with the idea that women might buy sex, especially when used with arguments designed to divorce the behaviour of women from that of men.

Defining sex tourism by associating males with violence.

Another approach is to deny the impact of female sex tourism is based on male and female sexual behaviour as being incomparable, for example, a contributor wrote, “they are not the same, they are totally different. So why, therefore, must they both be judged the same” (Comment 153). More explicitly, comment 151 states, “the Rhonda’s I am sure treat their Ketut’s a little more decently than the Ron’s would treat their Thai Sophon’s (sic)”.

Tankard Reist (2010), said in her newspaper article, “when women pay men for sex, it doesn't have the same social effect because there is no history of women enslaving men” (para. 10). Consideration of the historical effects of stereotypical gender roles is relevant in social discourse, in which fixed gendered behaviours are relied on to disagree with a double standard. For example, comment 81, “Unfortunately, the behaviour of men has in the main been historically so bad in similar circumstances that a gender switch would not ring true for any viewer, male or female”. Comment 151 adds, “male sex tourism is still for the most part sleazy. It is about sex, sex, and nothing but the sex. With as many different partners as possible”. These understandings, which Taylor (2001) also found to be common, privilege men with desire thereby precluding female desire and the possibility of a woman being able to sexually exploit a man. Using more contemporary or third wave feminist notions of gendered behaviour, other contributors argued the opposite such as, “it might surprise you to learn that female sex tourism is about sex, sex, and nothing but the sex too” (comment 170).

Defining sex tourism by intent – female motivations, covert payments and romance.

Sexual desire underpins sexual commerce however, additional motivations and ways of going about buying sex are typically believed to be gender specific. Haphazard transactions, such as a lack of negotiation and settlement of cash payments for sex, blur the definition of commercial sex. N. Bowen (2013), in his article, said, “only the most wide-eyed romantic is capable of observing an average-looking Western tourist with a younger, much more attractive local and not wondering about the latter's motives”. Similarly, comment 81 noted, “given how overseas or tourist resort ‘romantic’ transactions are structured, the boundaries are often deliberately kept fuzzy by both those in the industry and those buying just so that it feels less like a transaction”. A thread in the comments demonstrates a personal account of what may be female sex tourism denial in comment 56:

I would like to dispel the myth that Rhonda and Ketut are any form of sex tourism. As a recently divorced 40 something I had a holiday on a nearby Pacific island and had a casual fling with waiter half my age. No money changed hands. We both enjoyed it.

End of story. I don't regret it.

In response, comment 57 replied, “bet you paid for everything and gave him a farewell present...no different to handing over cash...call it what your conscience can handle...” and comment 58 added, “then you didn't give fair return for services rendered. You duded the poor bloke!” While the motivations or remunerations of the author of comment 56’s waiter are unknown, both replies provide alternative constructions to her behaviour, demonstrating that definitions of sex tourism do not necessarily lie with the actors. Un-brokered transactions and expected gender roles of behaviour allow women to deny any economic leverage in sexual transactions. However, most of the men and women commenting on Bowen’s article were aware of economic inequities while travelling abroad. As an example, the author of comment 229 wrote of her personal experience:

I went to Thailand recently I was feted and fawned on like I was a queen. I was horrified. Especially, when I was approached by a beautiful young man the same age as my son. Apart from the awful realisation, that yes, I was lonely (and at an age where finding a sexual partner is harder and so a target for this young man's business) I felt responsible for him. The thought of using him made me sick to the stomach. If anything as an older person I should be supporting him through school or business (without the sex!).

Comment 230 responded:

A sensible reaction I think [comment 229 name]. The young man seems to have been the user there, manipulating you into caring. Perhaps if you'd been alone long enough

you might even have been tempted to be his patron and that could have evolved into something else. Emotions can be quite slippery things I'm told.

Comment 230 suggests that a male sex worker could be predatory, and makes a more subtle suggestion that women in similar situations to commentator 229 might be emotionally manipulated or driven by loneliness to enter into a commercial sexual relationship. The idea that only women can be seduced into a romantic relationship is based on essentialist notions such as, comment 169 which said, "women are driven to enter into a relationship prior to having sex with the man, while most men are...", apparently not. The estrangement of male and female sexual behaviour sanctions the widely divergent treatment of male and female sex tourists.

Female motivations to enjoy romance rather than sex were emphasised in the data. Twenty-eight contributors in the online conversation interpreted the relationship as somewhere between true love and sex tourism; 17 expressing an opinion that Rhonda and Ketut enjoyed romantic fantasy without sex, and 11 saying they believe that they did have sex but it was romantic or casual and non-commercial. For example, comment 219 says, "these ads are a play on daydreaming" and comment 43, "where in the ad does it show money being exchanged or mentioned? It's just a fling". These interpretations of the relationship indicate a contention to the true love narrative without being overtly challenging such as an interpretation of female sex tourism.

A further motivation for denial of female sex tourism could be due to a desire to represent romantic notions of sex and love as being mutually inclusive – especially for women – keeping fidelity to the preferred cultural position of true love found in the response to the Rhonda advertisements. For example, after explaining that Rhonda and Ketut were in true love, the author of comment 175 wrote, "it is the politically correct police like yourself [Bowen] that try to read between the lines and make mileage of something which does not

exist”. However, the dominance of true love readings of Rhonda and Ketut paint Bowen’s position as politically incorrect.

Romantic motivations are often applied by female tourists and sex workers to distance themselves from committing sordid commercial acts and have been noted in various personal accounts in media (e.g., Silver, 2013a). Romantic intentions emphasise female virtuousness and naivety even as potential consumers of commercial sex. Defence of the true love narrative indicates there is a cultural preference that needs to be preserved and is possibly affected by the promises of female sex tourism.

Double standards of gendered behaviour.

Textual analysis asked the specific question, what were the responses regarding a possible gendered double standard in the treatment of male and female sex tourists. Examples include comment 217, “it’s just another case of feminine hypocrisy. It’s alright when they do it, but men are called dirty old men engaged in exploitative sex tourism when they do it”, and comment 78, “we can’t condemn men for doing the same, then giggle at women doing it”. Double standards which privilege women impair feminist action for gender equality as demonstrated in comment 12, “the women’s rights pendulum has swung so far that anything females like is OK and anything males like is basically not alright”.

All sex tourism was constructed as troublesome by four contributors who denied a double standard, for example, “I don’t think a double standard exists as the author argues. Women on ‘fun’ holidays receive the same disgust as. But it’s an Ad... Rhonda and Katat (sic) are not reflective of changing social norms” (Comment 88). Ideology that considers all genders who buy sex to invite disgust is visible in popular media, for example, the intertext by journalist Tankard Reist (2010), states that women lack “the male gaze”, and:

just because it's women doing the buying — and the pimping — doesn't make it liberating. Being able to trade in human flesh doesn't mean that emulating the sexual behaviour of men and their sense of entitlement to women's bodies, is progress.

Tankard Reist attempts to criticise women who buy sex to emphasise that she is against the commercialisation of sex in general. Although it would appear that she is equally critical of men and women who buy sex her description of undesirable behaviour as being a male activity reveals a double standard.

In response to Bowen's gender role reversal of Rhonda/Ron, and in keeping with McKee's commutation test, several commentators illustrated the double standard with role reversals. Comment 194 stated, "and yes, the inequality you mention. An ad showing sexual chemistry between a 40 year old man and a 20 year old girl would have the complaints board lighting up, but apparently it's okay for Rhonda, that's not creepy at all", and comment 256, "I think Rhonda and Ketut sail close to the wind and there is an element that would not be acceptable if the sexes were reversed". Gendered double standards that privilege women, and which dichotomise men and women, were argued against. Sixty-one contributors agreed with Bowen that the AAMI advertisements condone a double standard in the treatment of male and female sex tourists and four of these agreed that the advertisements directly promoted female sex tourism.

The actual words used by contributors to describe people in commercial sex transactions were revealing in terms of understandings of gendered double standards and in views about power relations. To illustrate the disparity more specifically, various verbatim words and phrases from the commentary are listed in relation to women's and men's roles as selling or buying sex:

- Women who buy sex were described as: "tourist having her dreams fulfilled" (comment 24), "more monogamous (for a week)" (comment 31), "cougar" (comment

42 and 73), “receive the same disgust as men” (comment 88), “more refined” and “tolerated” (comment 151), “as disturbing as males” (comment 247), “brave in their search for pleasure” (comment 314), and “just as capable of exploitation” (comment 352).

- Men who buy sex were described as: “pervert exploiting the locals” (comment 24), “act like gluttons” (comment 31), “dirty old men” (comment 42), “sleazy” (comment 151), “walking wallets” (comment 230), “domineering and violent” (comment 238), and “show blithe disregard” (comment 253).
- Women who sell sex were described as: “have little respect for their clientele” (comment 31), “forced to sell herself to eat” (comment 78), “sexual exploitation of women has been about gender. Poverty and dependency is feminine” (comment 107), “pimped” (comment 238), “might actually enjoy being whores” (comment 242), “despise the men that pay them” and “they do enjoy sex but never with the clients” (comment 243), “damaged goods” (comment 254), “sex spoils women” (comment 312), and “more likely to be exploited... by their pimps” (comment 351).
- Men who sell sex were described as: “little respect beyond professional courtesy” (comment 31), “many boys are sold into sexual slavery” (comment 104), and “manipulating” (comment 230).

About one third of the audience commentary demonstrated through their choice of words that their assessment and treatment of sex tourists was based on gender and not on actions. Fewer kind words are used to describe men who buy sex when compared with women. However, it is recognised that the online commentary was specifically about female sexual agency.

Female sex workers were considered victims in the commentary more often than males, although a strong narrative of exploitation of both sex working genders was also apparent.

Power relations in commercial sex.

Impacts of female sex tourism and the sex industry generally, were discussed in the comments to Bowen's article, largely in terms of power relations. The sex trade was considered exploitative by 26 contributors and as work and/or fair trade by 25. Conflating consensual sex work with slavery or victimisation is widespread in academic literature (Weitzer, 2010). Weitzer (2010) explains that an oppression paradigm that is used in sex work discourse is based on the proliferation of myths, which are in turn increasingly reflected in media and articulated in government policy in several jurisdictions. He says this "creates a serious distortion of the reality of prostitution" (Weitzer, 2010, p. 16). The theme of power emerged from the data in an inductive fashion, without asking a specific question. The first power relation presented below reflects racial power and the following section presents evidence of the proliferation of myths used in oppression paradigms through examination of a dichotomy which frames the sex trade as either sexploitation or sex work.

Racism and exotic destinations.

It has been noted in academic discourse that literature about sex tourism has a strong regional focus that links sexual exploitation to developing nations, yet "millions of Indian and Chinese tourists" (p. 1) travel to Western countries and pay for sex (Bandyopadhyay, 2013). Future sex tourism research using a *reverse gaze*, by investigating Asian sex tourism in Western countries, has the potential to disrupt arguments that define sex tourism in only developing nations as exploitative.

Racial difference is noted in media; Bowen (2013) describes Rhonda as "tapping into the Western fantasy of a paid fling with an exotic foreigner", and journalist Bindel (2003) explains:

Racist ideas about black men being hypersexual and unable to control their sexuality enable them to explain to [potential clients and] themselves why such young and

desirable men would be eager for sex with older and/or overweight women, without having to think that their partners are interested in them only for economic reasons.

The signs of ethnicity depicted in the Rhonda advertisements were interpreted by some audience members to be racist. For example, comment 82 in response to Bowen's article, stated, "Ketut's appeal lies in him being somehow exotic and a little hard to predict" and comment 224 is more interpretative in their response:

A plain looking white woman (Rhonda) has enough money to spare form a marginal saving on car insurance premiums to travel to an Asian destination and have several Asian women compete for the privilege of massaging her feet. Then the Ketut ads ... Plain white Jane picks up an Asian guy who's job it is to serve her drinks.... The inherent power imbalances give rise to something inherently racist (or at least disrespectful) in these ads.

Comment 224 emphasises the racial element through the repetition of the word Asian and by describing Rhonda as plain and white, demonstrating McKee's (2003) exnomination test for racial inequity. Although it is of interest to note that the Rhonda advertisement series was very popular with the Balinese locals as they capitalised on the humour through sales of Rhonda memorabilia (N. Bowen, 2013; M. Miller, 2013).

Another example of McKee's (2003) exnomination test is demonstrated by comment 4, "if Rhonda had been to London and hooked up with a white Englishman there'd be no problem accepting this as a holiday fling". Indeed, had Rhonda and a fellow white tourist developed a relationship, audience engagement is unlikely to have been as successful. This point reveals that the appeal of Rhonda and Ketut's relationship lies absolutely in the power imbalance of economy and race and, the fact that the holder of the power in this relationship is female.

Sexploitation of sex workers.

In response to Bowen's article, most comments agreed that Rhonda and Ketut's relationship portrayed sex tourism and that female tourists sometimes buy sex, and about half of the commentators constructed this as exploitation of sex workers. One thread of commentary discussed a documentary *Female Sex Tourism* posted to YouTube on 21 January 2012 (RedNightCity, 2012). Comment 247 said, "I've seen an interesting documentary on this, featuring British women.... I found that as disturbing as the male sex tourism industry". The documentary follows several single female friends and their families traveling from the UK to Turkey for the purpose of having sex with locals. Comment 278 replied, "I saw that doco too. .. It was fairly mutual exploitation I think". The cultural dominance of narratives that pedestals true love condemns sex without emotional involvement and by their own definitions, sex tourism. For example, "I think it's sad that money has become so much a part of all our lives that we see intimacy and relationships as just another commodity to be bought and sold. It's just sad" (comment 360). Others agreed, such as:

And how many such 'flings' are attempts to flee economic disadvantage by cosying up to a 'rich' white woman? If the man were financially comfortable would he be doing it? ...Given the age difference, the attractiveness difference, and the general dopiness that 'Rhonda' seems to portray (comment 44).

These comments construct motivation for sexual contact to be singular. A promise of money or economic benefits may contribute to a decision to have sex, and touch, pleasure, intimacy, release of sexual tension, desire to be desired and, infinitely more reasons may also apply.

Interestingly, economic discordant couples who profess to be in love do not command the same indignation, regardless of gender or race. This is evident in five comments and in the culturally preferred reading of true love for Rhonda and Ketut. One of the comments, comment 247, separates love from commercial sex, "love is one thing, but sex tourism is

exploitation... whether the victims are male or female". The sex worker has become the victim in comment 247 illustrating a point that sex for money and not love is not voluntary.

The victim becomes the slave in comment 141:

A person (female or male) who could give someone money in exchange for intimate acts and call it a fair transaction, has very little self-respect and no respect for the person at the other end of the transaction. Basically you are taking in a slave and promoting slavery.

In addition, comment 141 stresses a belief that people who engage in sexual acts without love do not command respect. The idea that economic disparity in relationships is only relevant if the sex is without emotional involvement reveals underlying notions that sex should not be a marketable commodity. Further, the notion suggests that people who sell sex for money would not do so if they had other choices, and people who buy sex are taking advantage of another's poverty and inability to consent.

Sex outside of true love narratives can also be based on a belief of sex work being inherently harmful, such as, Comment 254, "they have no realistic alternative career once they've become 'damaged goods'. That's the exploitation... the disparity of economic power between the 'consenting' parties". Using McKee's structuring absences test, this comment firstly frames sex workers as damaged goods, perhaps they believe sex is damaging, sex outside of love is damaging, sex with multiple partners is damaging, or social stigma of being a sex worker is damaging. Secondly, comment 254, and comments 141 and 247 above, imply that sexual consent granted in commercial sex is not real consent, due to sex being equated with money, consent is only granted for money, or, no person would consent to sex for money unless they were desperate. Although comment 254 did not specify a gender of sex worker, these attitudes are often gender based, as only women are sullied by sordid sex, and female consent is of the most concern in sex industry narratives. The effect of these narratives

is to undermine the ability for informed choice about how to use one's body or one's choice of work, and for those who have less gender or economic power, the narrative removes their agency, compounding their vulnerability with their status.

There were many comments that afforded different motivations to buy sex and different behaviours when buying sex to different genders. Comment 101, says:

I take your point and agree - all exploitation of poor people by rich people = exploitation. But, I find it interesting that your article on sexual exploitation makes not a single mention of the difference between power and disadvantage between males and females - both here and in the countries you mention. You are a journalist who writes with shock and horror that women are seeking the same kind of experience that it has been acceptable for men to have for generations but you haven't bothered to provide any actual research into how similar or dissimilar the two experiences actually are. Are women buying sex in Thailand choosing underage companions? Do the men selling themselves have more, less or the same agency and autonomy than the women who do it? Are they kids sold into the business or are they adults looking to make a buck? Do men and women who buy sex treat the seller the same (respect or cruelty) and does that make a difference to the morality of the transaction? Less sensationalism and more substance please.

Comment 101 uses a deflection technique described by Due (2011) to suggest that male sex tourists may seek to abuse children and they may be cruel to female sex workers. Comment 101 also suggests that women have fewer choices of occupation than men. Comment 101 considers gender power to be of more significance than economic power. When specifically focusing on the gender distinction, four other comments purported that male sex workers are not victims but female sex workers are, and two argued that only male sex tourists are violent. For example from comment 351, "one thing to keep in mind is that female prostitutes

are much more likely to be exploited than men”, and “it is undeniably true that female sex workers the world over are at far more risk of violence than their male counterparts” by comment 353. Narratives that dichotomise men as predators and women as prey do little to assist any victim of sexual violence (Davis & Miles, 2013) and deflect from conversations about adult consensual non-violent commercial sex. The emphasis on the strength of gendered power relations is inherently connected to an ideology that female agency to buy or sell sex, is feeble.

Sexploitation of female sex tourists.

The exploitation narrative regarding female sex workers is sometimes extended to female sex tourists. Sex tourists of all genders may be at risk when romanticising economic discordant holiday relationships. People may enjoy and may justify commercial sex acts by construing them as romantically entangled, and sex workers can capitalise on the same token. However, a failure to negotiate the terms of sexual services upfront can lead to misunderstandings and feelings of being taken advantage of. Matty Silver, a sexual health therapist wrote an article for the Sydney Morning Herald in 2013 presenting such a case (significantly, Silver uses the Rhonda advertisements as introduction to the topic). She describes a case history of a woman who had a relationship with a tour guide in Jordan in which the woman felt “conned” after “gifting” several thousand dollars (Silver, 2013a). In another example, a British woman was reported as being a victim of a love scam, having married her holiday lover in Nigeria and returning with him to the UK, where he confessed that he did not love her (ninemsm, 2014). The public online comments to the above stories include shaming the women for being naïve. In the commentary to Bowen’s article, Comment 15, acknowledges that any person can be taken advantage of:

Thailand is awash with stories of nurture starved, devalued, late middle-aged Western men, who believed what they were told by that sweet young honey who gave them

their all. Lured in, they invest a lot. Hearts, emotions, and savings. To be taken so ruthlessly at that stage of life is devastating. Man or woman. Keeping it sex and brief = little risk! Linger? Buyer be very aware! So, thinking of a wee jaunt to The Gambia girls? If you are not the predatory sex tourist type, good luck!

However, it would seem that the majority of contributors to Bowen's article are aware of personal boundaries and safety⁷ when travelling, whether or not they participate in sexual activity with locals.

Not all contributors considered women to be likely victims in sexploitation narratives. Comment 252 said, "women are just as capable, indeed some might suggest more so, of exploiting paid companions; and to imply that it is only men who exploits is naïve". I found no accounts in other media of physical violence perpetrated by women towards male full-service sex workers. However, an Australian newspaper article by Harvey (2014) stated that male strippers frequently suffer welts and bruises after being bitten and scratched. Along similar lines, comment 154 sarcastically noted, "I am sure men murder differently than women too - perhaps more discreetly and in a 'more refined' manner... But it is the same incident, genitals aside. Let action be judged, not gender".

Sex work is work and/or fair trade.

The sex work is work discourse, coined by sex worker Carol Leigh in 1978, is now prominent in academic literature (Harcourt & Donovan, 2005; Scott & Minichiello, 2014). Although Bowen's article is specifically about sex tourism, a sex work is work narrative was evident in the commentary with about half of the contributors supporting sex as work or fair trade. Comment 130 explained:

There is a cultural assumption implicit in this article, that paying someone for sex is inherently exploitative. This may be an individual's view, and it is widespread in our

⁷ Australians make over eight million trips overseas each year www.smarttraveller.gov.au/travel-advice-explained.html

culture. However, we live in a free, capitalist society, and there are those that choose this freely and willingly as well paid employment. Why not allow those in less developed countries to have a similar profession? This is a million miles from forced sex slavery, and is as legitimate a business between consenting adults as any other.

Further comments discussing sex work as work were framed by comment 309:

The problem with your "It's exploitation because they're only doing it for the money" argument is that it also applies to most other working people...If sex work is illegitimate because those who are doing it are doing it for the money then all other forms of paid work are also illegitimate.

When sex work is framed as consensual adult work, buying sex is simply a purchase of a service without inherent exploitation. Comment 311, exposes underlying bias by asking, "are you able to look at sex work as just an occupation, or do you have a particular objection to sex?" Unpacking the exploitation narratives above revealed that sex, without love or commitment, is often the objection. Although both sex worker and sex tourist are making the choice to have sex, the contractor is often constructed as an offender and the service provider as a victim. Comment 264 provides an alternative argument, "to assume it is exploitation is insulting to the people who buy it and the people who provide it". In this view, people having sex are credited with agency to make their own decisions without presumptions of their motivations or returns.

Comment 122 disclosures a more permissive view of sex and sex tourism:

I have girlfriends, when they divorced they were already middle aged, they did their best to find a 'local' boyfriend, lover, partner... they found lots of no-hopers, drunks...They tried their luck at South American Clubs, they had fun, but no permanent partners...Is it a wonder they go to places like Bali to find 'something', they do no harm.

I use McKee's structuring absences test to examine what comment 122 did not say; women went overseas to find something (love, lust, or a friend), had fun (sex or platonic friendship), did no harm (to themselves or others) and did not return with permanent partners (were unsuccessful or not motivated to find a permanent partner). In context of the discussion about female sex tourism, the likely meaning of comment 122 is an example of women seeking and having sex overseas. Although other interpretations are possible, the comment would more likely state the obvious if there were no social stigma in the intended message. It is the absence of phrases like, sex without commitment or perhaps, commercial sex, which signify the intended meaning of comment 122.

A brief thread in the comments suggested that the Rhonda advertisements promoted female sex tourism. "I want what she's [Rhonda] having", joked comment 84. Although comment 84 could be suggesting that she wants to save money on her car insurance, in the context of a discussion about Rhonda's sexual relationship with Ketut, the comment is likely a humorous and ironic (and not serious) example of successful marketing for female sex tourism.

Strengthening the sex work is work discourse, 13 commentators expressed the opinion that sex tourism is considered a form of economic aid. Bindel (2003), a feminist journalist, advances a similar view by stating that some female sex tourists believe they are helping the men and the local economy by giving them money and gifts. Comment 314 expressed, "at least these older women are brave in their search for pleasure and bring some well needed money to the island, maybe to feed their cow-boys children". And, comment 249 added, "sex tourists do more for the places than most tourists. They distribute wealth to the grass roots". These opinions have validity when tourism in general is considered to be a "backbone industry throughout Southeast Asia" and yet, profits "typically tend to benefit international tour operators, foreign investors, and large hotel chains, with financial gains rarely trickling

down to local communities” (Bernstein & Shih, 2014, p. 6). Economic inequities are closely tied to racial inequities in sex tourism.

Summary

This chapter examined some contemporary discourse regarding women who buy sex through analysis of an advertisement series and the surrounding subsequent media. The findings reveal a variety of ways the audience members perceive female sexual agency particularly around the use of commercial sex. In a situation of social, economic and racial power, a woman also holds sexual power which was considered dubiously. Most audience members for the advertisements resolved their discomfort with female sexual agency by constructing their understandings using traditional gendered positions and a preferred cultural reading of true love. Bowen’s challenge and the audience responses demonstrated multiple methods used to define female sex tourism in ways that denied female sexual power. The idea of unequal power relations as being minimised for women and not for men suggests a dominant discourse of gender power being considered the *almighty* power.

When gendered power trumps all other power, female tourists are excused for engaging in powered and or commercial relationships with locals due to the perceptions of female desire for love and scepticism regarding female sexual agency. Male tourists are not generally afforded the same kindness despite evidence that they often buy sex using romantic sexual scripts (Sanders, 2008). The majority of contributors to comments on Bowen’s article agreed, after Bowen drew attention to it, that there was a double standard of gendered behaviour for sex tourists and language used to describe sex workers and sex buyers demonstrated a broader application of a gendered double standard.

Public concerns about the effects of sex tourism and sex work on sex workers were equally divided in regarding commercial sex as work or exploitation and some contributors considered only female sex workers and not male sex workers as exploited. Although men

and women may sell sex in similar circumstances, women are often perceived to be victims incapable of consent, when men were not likely to suffer due to their assumed hypersexualised state. Similarly, when men and women buy sex in similar circumstances, men are more often considered exploitative due to their propensity to violence and a few of the contributors illustrated these notions. These notions are further evidence of gendered power being considered almighty. Ironically, double standards of treatment of men and women buying sex privilege women while expressing resentment about perceived male entitlement. The AAMI advertisements capitalised on contemporary views of female sexual agency as unlikely and humorous and audience engagement demonstrated a cultural preference of true love for women. Bowen's audience demonstrated a social challenge to traditional ideas of female sexual agency which could reflect societal pragmatism about progressive sexuality.

Chapter 6

Methods for Gathering Empirical Evidence of Women Buying Sex

This chapter outlines the procedures used to find out about women buying sex from two sources, sex workers and female clients. The first section of this chapter explores various methods of collecting sensitive data and justifies the procedures used which apply to both sub-studies. The two subsequent sections document specific procedures used; one section on interviews with sex workers and a further section on interviews with women who have bought sex.

Ethics Approval

Application to the University of New South Wales Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) for approval to interview members of the public was initially made in November 2014. The Committee required assurance regarding the project's viability in the form of letters of support from agencies and organisations that might have contact with and be gatekeepers of possible key informants. Letters asking for support were sent to various organisations and all requests for support were agreed except for Coalition Against Trafficking in Women Australia (CATWA). After submission of the support letters, HREC approval (#HC14298) was received on 25 February 2015.

Included in the ethics approval was a Participant Information Sheet to be emailed to eligible participants who agreed to be interviewed. The information sheet outlined the study aims, who could participate, what was involved in participating, any possible risks and benefits of participation, how to withdraw from the study, how results would be disseminated and how to contact the researcher for further information. The participant information sheets are provided at Appendix E.

Participant Recruitment

Recruiting participants who may be highly stigmatised required the use of advertising to allow them to self-select and volunteer without coercion and assuring their anonymity. The primary advertisement, listed at Appendix F was sent to organisations and placed online on Facebook. It was designed to be easy to read and directed interested people to a website with further information. The website provided study information and researcher contact details, and was set up in March 2015, as part of the general study recruitment pages hosted by the Centre for Social Research in Health at University of New South Wales. The information on the website is included in this thesis, also at Appendix F.

It is acknowledged that digital advertising for recruitment may not reach the entire pool of eligible participants. Similarly, participation was only available to people with digital technology and skills and who speak English. In addition, self-selecting participants for interview are a convenience sample who do not represent all sex workers or all opinion about women buying sex, and participants who are highly motivated to participate may have stronger opinions than eligible but non-participating people. Sex workers and women who buy sex are not homogeneous populations, accessible through any particular avenue or location. They seem to have no public communication between them, available for analysis.

In-depth Interviews

Using interviews for data collection appeared to be the obvious choice in terms of collecting first hand data. However, Silverman (2013) has concerns about participant bias in interviews although he supports interview methods when ethnographic or extant data are unavailable and care is taken to ensure analysis attends to full narrative construction rather than short verbatim quotes. The method of interviewing sex workers as key informants and then their male clients was used by Bernstein (2010). She found that obtaining data from both sides of the commercial transaction strengthened her analysis regarding authenticity of

intimacy in commercial relationships. In a similar way, this project included interviews with key informants, which comprise of sex workers of any gender, prior to interviewing women who bought sex. Sex workers who service female clients have a unique understanding about women who buy sex that may raise important concepts, previously unconceived, for consideration when subsequently interviewing women who buy sex. To allow participants freedom to express their perceptions semi-structured interviews were selected as the most appropriate interview style.

Duration of interviews.

Due to the value of participant's time and non-remuneration of participants, interviews were guided for 30 minutes. Sixty minutes were allowed in the event of informants who were willing to speak for longer. Charmaz (2006) suggests a timeframe of less than one hour to be the most productive in-depth interview time. To ensure this time was well spent, non-judgemental interviewer skills were exercised, making use of my current counselling qualifications. Braun and Clarke (2006) make clear that interviewer skills are vital to study success, and in this study participant comfort and safety were required to foster sharing of personal and potentially stigmatising information.

Interview technology.

Due to limited resources, the ideal method of face-to-face interviews of participants from all over Australia was not feasible. Telephone interviews offered greater practical access to participants and were considered until further research revealed the possibilities of using Skype (Deakin & Wakefield, 2013). Skype is an attractive option which is easy-to-use, can be used from computers and mobile phones, and can also be used to dial landlines and mobile numbers.

Number of Interviews.

In determining the number of interviews to aim for, thought was given to both a potential method of analysis and scholarly literature regarding sample sizes. Ritchie and Lewis (2003) suggest several factors affect sample size, including heterogeneity of the population, multiple samples within the same study, methods of interviewing, and the budget and resources available. A small sample is expected in qualitative research according to Mason (2010), and saturation is decided upon diminishing returns, meaning that more data do not produce more themes.

Braun and Clarke (2006) do not give any suggested sample sizes in their thematic analysis guide, however, they note good data is gathered by the skills of the researcher to “interact with research participants in such a way that they generate rich and complex insights” (p. 98). Crouch and McKenzie (2006) suggest a small sample is appropriate because qualitative research is concerned with meaning and not making generalised hypothesis statements. The problem here is, a *small* sample size is not a defined number. Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) address the problem of predetermining sample sizes and note that few method experts provide guidelines for sample size. Some imprecise guides for sample sizes include; for grounded theory 20-25 (Bryman, 1988), or 20-30 (Creswell, 2013; Morse, 2000), and for phenomenology 5-25 (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007) or at least six (Morse, 2000). Mason (2010) illustrated the sample size problem by examining methods of 2533 PhD theses which had used qualitative analysis and interviews, and found numbers of participants ranged from one to 95 (median 28, mean 31). The most common sample sizes were 20 and 30, suggesting that scholars are not working with saturation in mind, but are looking for quota (Mason, 2010). Following the advice of Bryman (1988) and Creswell (2013), I attempted to interview 20-25 key informants about women who buy sex and, 25-30 with women who had

bought sex. The actual number of interviews conducted and the process involved is described in detail in subsequent sections referring to each sub-study.

Theoretical saturation.

Method experts Morse (1995) and G. Bowen (2008) are concerned that researchers often claim to have achieved saturation but are unable to prove it, and suggest novice researchers explicitly state their process of claiming saturation. The concept of saturation of data was originally described in 1967 by Glaser and Strauss (2009), as a situation where no new themes emerge with new data and concepts in theory are well-developed. Saturation predicaments arise when guessing the number of interviews required prior to data collection, and when determining and claiming saturation which rest on the skills and rigour of the researcher. Corbin and Strauss (2015) suggest that saturation is a *matter of degree* and Dey (1993) thinks the whole concept of saturation is misleading and it would be better to stop collecting data when it becomes *counter-productive*, when new information, albeit interesting, does not alter the overall description. Charmaz (2006) suggests small studies which target a specific and small group of people, might achieve saturation quicker than larger studies which intend to create theory. She considers the experience of the researcher as most important, as those with more experience may not claim saturation but examine themes in more detail (Charmaz 2006). The notion of theoretical sensitivity underlying theoretical saturation is described by Morse (2004) as data driven, when the relationships between firmly boundaried concepts have been verified including negative cases which might challenge boundaries. The experience of achieving theoretical saturation for each data collection and analysis for this project is described in each of the procedure sub-sections further in this chapter.

Interview procedure.

When potential participants followed the link in the advertisements to the study webpage and subsequently contacted me via email, I engaged in a brief verification of their eligibility for the study and negotiated an interview time. Eligibility for participation included being a sex worker who had two or more female clients in the last year or being a self-identified woman who had bought sexual services, and all participants were over 18 years of age. Participants were emailed a Participant Information Sheet. Some sex working volunteers were not interviewed based on not having experience with female clients.

At the time of the interview, I used Skype on my computer to contact the participant on their device of choice or call them on their landlines or mobile phones. All interviews were recorded using a free application, *MP3 Skype recorder*, and backed up with a Livescribe recording pen. As each interview commenced, participants were asked if they had read and understood the participant information sheet. Questions about consent to participate were asked and verbal consent was audio recorded as part of the interview. Care was taken by researcher and participants to keep identifying information out of the interviews, following an agreement not to use participants' names or locations. Notes were taken during interviews which were visually recorded in synchronicity with audio (a feature of the Livescribe pen). The notes, recordings and subsequent transcripts were stored on a secure computer and server with no identifying information.

Interview guides.

Interview guides for interviews with sex workers and for women who had bought sex were designed to guide discussions. The full guides are provided at Appendix G. Generally, interviews included an introductory greeting, obtaining verbal consent as documented in the Participant Information Sheets, open questions about female clients or experiences of being a female client, questions about the key concepts of gender, sexuality and power, closed and

more probing questions if needed, a closing question to allow interviewees opportunities to give additional information, and a prompting to summarise and thank the interviewee.

Sub-study of Key Informants

The idea of interviewing key informants was to find out what was actually happening regarding women buying sex, to begin to understand consumer/service provider roles, and to situate women's accounts of buying sex in a broader context. I *intended* to interview key informants such as researchers, sex industry opponents, sex industry activists, policy makers and sexual health professionals. During the interview process, my intentions changed, as described henceforth.

Recruitment.

The process of recruiting and interviewing key informants began in April 2015 and was completed in October 2015. Key informants are people who have detailed or privileged knowledge of women buying sex, and initial target audiences included sex workers who service female clients, opinion leaders, policy and law makers and sexual health professionals. The intention was to have direct contact with relevant organisations which support sex workers and peer service providers, such as various State based Sex Workers Outreach Projects (SWOP), as well as through participant referral. The first advertisement for recruitment of key informants went to the membership of Scarlet Alliance, the national Australian sex workers association, in early April 2015, and resulted in six interviews with sex workers in that month. One of the sex workers put the study details on her Facebook page which subsequently resulted in an unknown amount of exposure through shares, and is likely responsible for most of the additional interviews conducted. The advertisement to the Australian Sexual Health Alliance (ASHA) in May 2015 resulted in no further contacts for interview. A lengthy process of study approval through SWOP, New South Wales, resulted in no organisational representative interviews, although an individual sex worker was

interviewed in June 2015. Requests for participants were sent to the Institute of Somatic Sexology, an educational Institute teaching *hands-on* sexology, in March and April 2015 with one interview occurring in May 2015. No replies were received from escort agencies in response to recruitment emails, although social media sharing in June and July 2015 likely resulted in other sex workers coming forward for interview. No replies were received from doctors of sexual medicine, Touching base (an organisation supporting people with disabilities to access trained sex workers), The Australian Sex Party (a political party) and EROS Association (a lobby group representing the adult goods industry) advertisements. Only sex workers with experience of more than two or three female clients in the last year were interviewed. Two of the sex workers interviewed in this project revealed they had also been clients of sex workers and were granted additional interviews as women who had bought sex. In all, 18 interviews were conducted by the end of October 2015, 17 with sex workers and one with an academic.

Key informant eligibility.

A pivotal moment occurred during the recruitment process, affecting a change in thinking about who were the key informants regarding the sex industry. In June 2015, I approached Dr Barbara Sullivan, from the University of Queensland and author of *The politics of sex: prostitution and pornography in Australia since 1945* (Sullivan, 1997). She declined an interview, stating that she had been cultivating a general stance of *not-knowing* sex industry politics over the last few years' due to a position of *nothing about us without us* (B Sullivan, personal communication, June 8, 2015). The slogan, nothing about us without us, has been used by marginalised groups to highlight the effect of policy formed without consultation from affected representatives of the population. Sullivan's standpoint resonated with preliminary analysis of the interviews with sex workers that were occurring at the time. Sex workers are sex industry experts and previous entreaties to interview key informants of

other professional status rested on a desire to claim legitimacy of the data. This was a manifestation of sexuality research stigma which Irvine (2015) documents as being more prominent in female researchers and Weitzer (2017) insists must be resisted in order to conduct non-biased research outcomes including stigma reduction for sex workers. At this time a non-sex working key informant, whom I had previously approached, contacted me for an interview. He had research experience regarding sex workers and had spoken to media about women buying sex in Australia. The resulting interview provided affirmation of the nothing about us without us perspective as the data had little in common with those provided by current sex workers. The data from the interview was removed from the key informant data and became valuable in respect of shaping the project. At that time, no other non-sex working key informants had volunteered to be interviewed, whether through ideals or coincidence. I stopped trying to recruit key informants who were not sex workers, and used the term *sex workers* to describe those interviewees with experience of sex work.

Interview content.

Particular questions in the interview guides regarded topic areas of clientele and services, language and culture, commercial sex definitions, significance, and gender difference.

Questions regarding female clients included “how many female clients do you see?” and “can you describe general characteristics of your female clients?” The numbers of clients seen suggests the level of experience workers have in working with women and reveals the character of the female market. Questions to sex workers regarding the characteristics of their female clients gave them opportunity to describe their clients in their own words, with further prompting to consider the ages, educational and income levels about women who buy sex, as required. Additional questions were asked about prices, the pathways women used to contact sex workers and female client behaviour.

The particular language that women use when negotiating commercial sex is of interest to this study as language can inform attitudes. Sex workers were asked, for example, if women use words of romance versus sex, or use euphemisms and metaphors such as *natural* versus *without a condom or dam*. The language of negotiating sexual services could indicate discourse that is drawn upon or created within the sex industry, which gives more colourful descriptions about the industry and informs interviewers of preferred terms to use when interviewing women who have bought sex.

Debates about the definition of commercial sex for women outlined in previous chapters of this thesis prompted a corresponding section in the interview guide. Sex workers were asked what they classify as commercial sex and if they distinguish commercial sexual services as different for men and women. Specific questions guided further exploration of their classification, such as: “Is erotic massage or dance considered commercial sex for men and/or women? If negotiations for services focus upon romance or social reasons and sex *happens* within the booking, is it commercial sex?”

Questions were asked of sex workers about the significance of women buying sex from health, political, legal, or academic viewpoints. Studies of female sex tourism have demonstrated poor condom use when compared with male sex tourism and health workers may or not be concerned with sexual health checks for female clients because they are not a targeted group. Opinion leaders may consider women buying sex to be very/or not significant in terms of the scale of women buying sex, or due to gendered power relations when women buy sex, and policy makers may view gender difference in male and female clients as important/unimportant when proposing and drafting regulatory models. Questions were: “Do women buying sex represent an at-risk group for sexually transmitted infections? Are models of regulation of the sex industry gendered in terms of language and enactment?”

When people buy sex, possible differences in the behaviour of genders were explored through asking sex workers, who worked with all genders, about client behaviour. Questions were: “Do men and women have the same choices when buying sex? Do men and women chose to buy sex for the same reasons? Do men and women behave in the same way when they buy sex? Are the risks and benefits of buying sex the same for men and women?”

Data analysis.

Immediately following each interview, a summary was written, containing details of participant manner, intuitive impressions about the participant, and non-verbal cues. Interviews were transcribed verbatim, directly into NVivo, a data management application, allowing ready cross referencing of sound bites to codes. This ensured that nuances of cultural expression such as sarcasm and general humour, were not misinterpreted by singular use of the transcript. Immediately following each transcription, the corresponding interview summary was revisited to evaluate and report on my interview style and skills as an interviewer. An example of an interview summary is provided at Appendix H.

The research question for key informants is about their experiences of women buying sexual services from them, meaning the method of analysis needs to be foundational, employing generic competences such as coding, identifying themes and making meaning. Several methods use thematic analysis as a tool (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Given, the absence of prior empirical evidence forming theory on the topic of women buying sex, the method should be exploratory and not concerned about creating theoretical or epistemological positions. Grounded theory seemed an attractive method for the project in both the systematic approach of Strauss and Corbin (1998) and the constructivist approach of Charmaz (2006). Theoretical sampling would ensure participant diversity and constant comparative analysis would keep the project on task. However, the idea of forming theory from key informant data was overambitious and did not match the aims of this project. Phenomenological analysis was

considered, yet, seemed to put too much emphasis on key informants as subjects (Creswell, 2013). Key informants are not themselves the subjects of this research project; key informants were to provide valuable information about women buying sex and the market available to them. Conversation analysis or discourse analysis were briefly considered as methods which might shed linguistic light upon industry language or political discourse, both of interest to the study. However, they also purport emphasis on participants as subjects rather than key informants. The content or data from key informants might be best examined through content analysis. Content analysis and thematic analysis are frequently conflated but content analysis relies more on quantification of data (Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013). Given the expected diversity of key informants, it seems counter-intuitive to expect consensus of perceptions as content analysis anticipates. Evidently, most commonly used methods employing thematic analysis appeared unsuitable for the expected data, questions and desired outcomes. Ultimately, thematic analysis itself materialised as the most congruent method of analysis for key informant data.

Justification for using thematic analysis as a stand-alone method came through the work of Braun and Clarke (2006). They describe the method as having theoretical freedom, potentially providing rich, detailed and complex accounts of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The actual process of thematic analysis involves organising and re-organising codes to identify themes and reporting them clearly, linking back to the research question and in a fashion that provides a sense of the scope and diversity of each. Used here, the data from key informants are presented as a description of the market for women buying sex with broader analysis of key concepts.

Transcriptions of the 17 sex worker interviews in NVivo formed the data which were analysed using a thematic approach guided by the work of Dey (1993) and Braun and Clarke (2006). Dey (1993) gives advice on how to create categories, split and splice categories, link

data and make connections. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest six phases of thematic analysis; familiarisation, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and reporting. Due to the intimate nature of the interviews, and engagement with and ownership of the transcription process, I felt thoroughly immersed with the data.

The entire data set was coded, giving full and equal attention to each phrase. Codes were data driven, meaning that codes were only created as data presented. Initial codes reflected questions asked of sex workers and then became broader as participants answered open questions in diverse fashions. Once coded into categories, or nodes in NVivo, each node was examined for accuracy of coding and to seek patterns. Initially, themes emerged regarding the characteristics of female clients, their motivations to buy sex and scale of the market. Themes about choices for women buying sex, their pathways and fees and charges were also generated. This reflected that sex workers were talking about the services they offered to women rather than each of their female customers. Themes about what is included as commercial sex, significance of the study and gender expression of clients were moulded as coding continued. It was quickly realised that the concepts of gender, power and stigma were of great significance to sex workers and to the epistemological focus of the study. These concepts were then re-examined throughout the data set using a deductive approach to seek references within all other themes, where overlap were frequently found. This initially inductive to secondary deductive approach moulded the themes distinctively and consistently.

Due to the inconsistent timing of volunteers coming forward for interviews during the months of recruiting and interviewing, coding of transcripts began before all interviews were completed. Coding prior to all data received is not a particular characteristic of thematic analysis, although desired in grounded theory approaches. Constant engagement with data and early analysis while collecting data ensured that interviews were streamlined to target information in weaker themes, and strong themes were quickly validated by participants,

lending a sense of confidence in pronouncing saturation. I experienced joy in being trusted to receive exciting and valuable information from participants, and as each theme amassed data, no doubt was felt as to theme clarity, validity, or theoretical saturation lucidity.

Confirmation of theoretical saturation occurred when coding interviews 15 to 18, and a decision was made to cease advertising and interviewing. Each theme was thoroughly examined by zooming in and out, summarising, memo writing, and comparison with other themes. Notes on each theme were used to craft the results, with constant checking back to verbatim quotes, and/or audio sound bites to ensure validity. The results, including the sample of interviewees are presented in chapter 7, use a combination of analyst narrative and data extracts to illustrate findings and represent the first description of the female market for sex in Australia.

Sub-study of Women Who Bought Sex

Eligibility criteria for the study included being a female identifying person who self-defined as having paid for sexual services in Australia. A few words were changed in the advertisements for sex workers to recruit women who had bought sex and the website was updated to reflect this focus.

Recruitment.

As mentioned in the sex worker section, two sex workers revealed that they had bought sex themselves and requested second interviews. These were held in April 2015, directly after the relevant sex worker interviews and provided me with an opportunity of shifting focus to subjective experiences of participants with whom rapport had already been built. As sex worker interviews wound down, advertising for women with experience buying sex began in September 2015.

Due to the poor participant volunteer rates from appeals to organisations compared with the superior response from social media sharing for recruitment of sex workers, I posted

my first advertisement on my private Facebook page and it was widely shared. Four participants came forward and were interviewed. The next advertisement was through the Australian Sex Party who chose to also post on their Facebook page. Two more participants came forward. As interviews of women who had bought sex slowed down in October 2015, I advertised the study in places where women might seek sexual services. I used online advertising space on websites Backpage and Locanto, which sex workers said they had used for advertising to women in the previous sub-study. These services provide very basic free advertising but do not allow advertising in different cities at the same time. I rotated the advertising between October 2015 and March 2016 in Sydney, Adelaide, Perth, Darwin, Cairns, and Brisbane. As a result, one woman who had bought sex in Adelaide volunteered for interview in February 2016.

In April 2016, a male sex worker started blogging about political threats to the model of decriminalisation of the sex industry in New South Wales. I did not read the blog but was quickly made aware that he expressed a concern that if the Swedish model came into effect, female clients would be criminalised for buying sexual services. Apparently, he suggested several ways in which female clients could anonymously advocate for their rights to buy sex, and included a link to this study's webpage. Six women who had bought heterosexual sex contacted me for an interview in the same week.

Further advertising for recruitment included the EROS magazine, and more Facebook shares through Touching Base and Scarlet Alliance, and asking sex workers to approach their female clients. At this time, the study had more heterosexual women than others. To seek diversity in the sample the advertising was tweaked to attempt to attract women of different sexual orientations. Two more women took part in April 2016, six in May 2016 and one in June 2016. I used this discriminate sampling (Creswell, 2013) to move toward saturation and determine that no new themes emerged from new data regardless of sexual orientation of

participants. The last interview, the twenty-first, was held in June 2016. All women who requested interviews were eligible for the study, each having bought multiple sexual services. Empirical data collection and initial coding of the interviews developed the analytic framework of concepts and themes (Saunders et al, 2018) and theoretical saturation was achieved, advertising ceased, and recruitment websites taken down.

Interview content.

The interview guide for interviews with women who bought sex, provided at Appendix G, was applied in a different way than for the sex worker interviews. An open-ended prompt, “tell me your story about buying sex” was used, rather than groups of questions from broad to specific focus. In this way, participants were encouraged to place emphasis on aspects of their experiences they felt to be the most important, to use their own language and to allow them to be the expert in their own experiences (Charmaz, 2006). Participant stories were not interrupted. If needed, clarification regarding key points in the story were asked and answered, until the participant was satisfied that their story had been told and I, the researcher, gained an understanding of the experiences of the participant. Following this, questions regarding socio-demographic characteristics, such as age, relationship status, educational level, ethnicity and income were asked to obtain background information about the sample. Keeping the participant’s full account in mind, further questions were only asked to fill any gaps in their narrative. These questions were related to, motivations to buy sex, the types of sexual services bought, the accessibility of sexual services for women, and the outcomes of buying sex. Additional questions were prepared about power relations when buying sex and whether the participant felt any sense of stigma about buying sex.

Previous studies about men who buy sex demonstrated that wanting sex per se is often not the primary motivator for buying sex. Therefore, questions were prepared to ask women

who did not address their motivations spontaneously to explore multiple reasons that women might buy sex, for example: “How did you know that you could buy sex? Were you in a relationship when you decided to buy sex? What other factors influenced your desire to buy sex, such as how you felt about your other relationships, or religious and moral beliefs? What expectations did you have about paying for sex before you did it?”

It was expected that women would have diverse experiences about buying sex, requiring direct questioning to clarify what type of service and the level of experience that each participant had. However, all participants volunteered information about the types of sexual services they bought. Questions on the interview schedule included: “How did you choose the particular service that you bought the first time? What steps did you follow to buy sex the first time? When was that? What type of sexual service did you buy?” Further questioning about location, cost and payment methods, age, ethnicity and gender of sex workers and, frequency of services were asked to gain more understanding about the available services for women. These included the use of escort services, transactional sex when goods or services might be exchanged for sex, ‘hands on’ sexual education, erotic massage or specialist services such as bondage and discipline.

In some debate about women buying sex it has been argued that women cannot access sexual services in the same way as men due to availability or to conformity to gender roles. To gain understanding about particular barriers or gateways to buying sex, questions asked included: “Was it easy to buy sex? Were there any barriers to buying sex? How did you overcome them?”

For those participants who did not complete their stories during the interview with specific outcomes, questions were asked about what actually happened. For example, “Did the service meet your expectations? Did you buy sex again with the same worker? Were there any unexpected positive or negative consequences? Do you feel any differently about

yourself and your sexuality since buying sex? Do you plan to buy sex in the future?” Further questions were designed to get a sense of what is happening within a sexual service in terms of dis/connection and intimacy and/or emotional involvement and may shed some light on the behaviour of participants when they buy sex, for example: “How would you describe the relationship you have with your sex worker/s?” Other specific questions were asked about safety including; “Were you under the influence of any drugs or alcohol at the time of buying sex? Did you use condoms/dams when you paid for sex?”

Further questions were asked to explore the relationship between consumer gender and power, including: “To what extent were you able to/did you/could you state what you expected physically from the service? Did the service provider understand your requirements and fulfil them? Did you feel in control of the situation at all times during the service?” Likewise, questions regarding secrecy and level of disclosure were asked, and included: “Have you told anyone else about buying sex? What would friends or family think about you if they knew that you bought sex? Would you recommend buying sex to a friend?”

Data analysis.

As a misunderstood and highly stigmatised group, clients of the sex industry are difficult to find (Scott & Minichiello, 2014). Sex workers, gatekeepers to their clients (Bernstein, 2010b) assisted in recruitment, and their interviews provided much needed background and informed the rationale for interviewing women who buy sex. The research question regarding women who buy sex asks about their particular experiences including their attitudes and emotions, meaning a more interpretive psychological analysis was required, to keep their stories as the primary subjects of this thesis and to honour them as the experiential experts in the topic. Little academic evidence of their existence, and stereotypical views portrayed in media, might leave a narrative study of women buying sex, open to

criticism as one of atypical or errant characters. In addition, a narrative study of these women would not have sufficed as contextualising their experiences was vital.

Similar methodological issues arose for investigating experiences of women buying sex as for sex workers. A hermeneutic method of inquiry was desired, a method of interpretation of texts, using the researcher's prior knowledge and experience (J. Smith, 2011). Given the expected diversity of participants with only experience in buying sex as common, some kind of phenomenological analysis seemed a good fit (Creswell, 2013). Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is an exploratory method that uses hermeneutics (J. Smith, 2011), rather than a phenomenological reductionist method (Giorgi, 1994; Moustakas, 1994). I was particularly attracted to IPA's fidelity to the phenomenon and freedom to interpret participant's emotions and attitudes not explicitly expressed (J. Smith, 2011). IPA acknowledges the complexity of understanding participant expression of emotional states influenced by stigma and accommodates the richness and rapport between researcher and participant. The results of analysing data about women buying sex present much more of a *first hand* experience than those of the sex workers.

The first additional steps of interpretative phenomenological analysis, after writing the interview summaries, involved writing an extensive memo of each case, specifically noting non-verbal cues and including information gained from the entire communication with each participant from first contact to conclusion of the interview (with no identifying information). From a psychological interpretative perspective, I asked for each case: "what is motivating this person to participate in the study, what do they want me to know, and how would they like me to advocate for them?" In this way, the most significant issues about buying sex for each interviewee could be determined from the data. This analytical approach allowed interviewees to create a hierarchy of importance of their information which did not occur during analysis of sex worker data, where all data were considered equal. The results

generated from analysis of these issues of significance for women buying sex are heavily represented in the discussion chapter as they contribute to the significance of this study.

Following analysis of each participants motivation to be in the study, coding of interview transcripts progressed as for thematic analysis, using a horizontalization approach across the data, to find clusters of meaning from significant statements (Moustakas, 1994). As themes emerged and developed, a description of the phenomenon of women buying sex in Australia was written as a composite description providing deep understanding. Themes regarding motivations to buy sex were broader than expected, especially as participants exclusively volunteered this information in the course of their stories, rather than answering specific questions. Likewise, themes around stigma contained unexpected subcategories. The particularly large sample size for an interpretative phenomenological analysis was justified by the diversity of women's experiences. Using discriminate sampling methods to *fine tune* recruitment advertising did attract participants whose interview data gave rise to theoretical saturation before the predicted quota of 25-30 was reached. The results are presented in chapter 8 of this thesis.

Chapter 7

Voices of Sex Workers

In this chapter, I present the findings of the thematic analysis of data from interviews with sex workers. After detailing the sample, the views about the women who bought sex and the services available to them are described. The reasons why women are thought to buy sex are presented. Lastly, the service providers' impressions of their interactions with, and the behaviour of female clients are explored. Throughout the chapter, verbatim quotes from the sex workers are used as illustrations.

Sex Worker Sample

Sex workers generously donated their knowledge and time for this project. Each participant described their own experiences and opinions. Appendix I lists the identified genders, orientations, main locations and types of sex workers interviewed. Of 17 participants, 10 were female, six were male and one identified as gender non-conforming. Nine workers lived mainly in New South Wales (NSW), three in Victoria (VIC), two in Western Australia (WA), two in Queensland (QLD) and one in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). None of the female workers described their orientations as straight, including one who described herself as gay for pay. Of the male sex workers, three said they were straight, one said he was straight for pay, another said he was gay and one did not describe his orientation.

The classification of a sexual act as commercial is not necessarily clear-cut (Harcourt & Donovan, 2005). All experiential participants were self-selecting volunteers who came forward knowing their services are considered sexual under Australian laws. However, not all participants identified as sex workers per se; one identified as a bodyworker, another as a masseur, and another as a stripper and porn actress. Some of the participants who did not wish to identify as sex workers explained that in their case, primary motivations of clients

who buy their services comprises of treating past sexual trauma or physiological sexual dysfunctions, or for educational purposes. Therefore, dissociating their services from sex industry services is favourable for client stigma management. I contend that the therapeutic benefit of any particular sexual service is unknown and make no hierarchy of sexual services based on motivations or other criteria in anticipation that broader definitions and understandings of the sex industry are beneficial. Consequently, this study includes therapeutic sexual services as commercial sex, and uses the term *buying sex* to describe all the services and experiences examined including sexual services which may not involve penetrative sex.

Female Clients of Sex Workers and the Services They Buy

Sex workers in this study were asked to describe the women who bought sexual services from them. Nine sex workers explicitly used the word diverse, and all 17 used synonyms of diverse to describe the range of female clients they saw. The clients could be from any ethnic or income group. Women who bought sex from these workers were described as being adults of any age, but with an average age of twenties to forties.

Sex workers themselves may have had pre-conceived and stereotypical ideas about female clients, such as Interviewee 5 (female sex worker [FSW], Pansexual, NSW) who said: “One of them came in and really surprised me. She just didn’t seem like the type. Actually, I suppose none of them really seem like the type”. Sex workers’ unanimous assertion that female clients are diverse may be an acknowledgement and rebuttal of female client stereotypes. Stereotypes of heterosexual women who buy sex, often portrayed in media, describe women as rich, lonely, bored, or busy. Male sex workers actively reported that women who bought sex were not all rich housewives or time-poor businesswomen. Some rather disappointed female sex workers remarked that not many women who buy sex from them were “hard core dykes”. One female sex worker said, “You know, there is nothing that

makes someone unusual for buying sex whether they are male or female, they could be anyone” (Interviewee 6 FSW Bi-sexual VIC). Further, female sex workers said that women who buy sex from women do not necessarily identify as lesbian. Three of the female sex workers said that they had mainly bi-sexual, bi-curious and some lesbian identifying clients and one male sex worker reported a lesbian client who was hetero-curious. It may be that heterosexually identified women buying sex from women tend to utilise services that encompass receiving rather than active participation. Sexual services which focus solely on the client, sometimes referred to as *one directional*, include erotic massage, educational or therapeutic services and some bondage and discipline (BDSM) services.

If any woman could buy sex, questions are raised about how many women in Australia buy sex. This study hopes to provide an evidenced based, well-informed description of women buying sex including some impressions about the size of the market. All sex workers of this study consider the female market for sex is increasing. Indications of this include sex worker analysis of their clientele and reflections of the market over time. One male sex worker (of six interviewed) said that his female clients were mainly “middle aged”, yet two other males and one female sex worker described the average age of their clients to be in their twenties to forties and “getting younger”. Four female sex workers (of ten interviewed) and two male sex workers report higher proportions of “female client virgins” amongst their female clients compared with the male market. Specifically, Interviewee 15 (Male Sex Worker (MSW), Straight, VIC) noted, “and a number of new clients, quite frequently, joining the scene”. Higher ratios of first time clients to existing clients may indicate growth in an emerging market. In addition, a worker with 28 years of sex work experience, Interviewee 13 (non-gender identified [NonGID] SW, Queer, VIC), “reflects [on] the slow rise of women accessing the sex industry as clients”.

These results suggest that in Australia, it is possible that more women may buy sex from women, than from men. Five male and one gender-diverse sex workers reported most or all of their clients as female. All ten of the female sex workers and one of the gay male sex workers interviewed, reported some female clients each. There are an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 sex workers in Australia at any one time who are “overwhelmingly female”, and a larger proportion of male sex workers see only male clients (Harcourt & Donovan, 2005). Two of the male sex worker participants made unspecific mention of other studies suggesting the female market for sex is increasing which use quantitative analysis of sex worker advertisements as measurement. These workers question the validity of these methods, explaining there are multiple advertisements for single workers, fraudulent and hopeful advertisements:

When the reality is, it is not a professional agency run by a women with six escorts.

It's one guy, and they've stolen or taken pictures of six different men from on-line...a lot of men will put ads up... So, they are going to spend their five to ten dollars a month, leaving their ad up and never getting any work. And, possibly enjoying the identity of the straight male sex worker. (Interviewee 11, MSW, Straight, NSW)

Anyone can say they are a male escort. They think they are amazing in bed. And they think they look amazing in the mirror, so therefore they think they will make a good escort. They don't last ten minutes. (Interviewee 15 MSW, Straight, VIC)

Examination of sex worker advertising may not exclusively or reliably indicate an increasing market of women buying sex, however, the addition of these sex worker accounts would suggest a growing number of women are buying sexual services in Australia. These women may buy sex from female sex workers more often than male, due to very small numbers of straight male sex workers compared with numbers of female sex workers who are willing to service female clients.

The types of services women buy.

Sex workers in this study described the services available for women as being the same as those available for men, with ten workers explaining that women do have some additional barriers. Interviewee 6 (FSW Bi-sexual, VIC) said that women “have the same choices but probably less opportunity”. Interviewee 11 (MSW, Straight, NSW) said that there may be less than 50 straight male career sex workers in Australia, giving heterosexual women far fewer choices of providers. Further barriers to buying sex are described through examination of various services which female clients accessed.

Agencies and private workers.

Sex workers of all genders sell sex to women through agencies and as independent providers. Sex workers said private workers may be the most common choice of service provider for women buying sex overall. Sex workers also said, escort agencies, defined as a single entity managing the marketing and bookings for several sex workers, may be the most common choice for women who want full heterosexual services.

Brothels.

Sex workers in this study said that female walk-ins to brothels are rare, and male walk-ins common. Of the four sex workers who said that they had seen female clients in brothels, two said that they had seen only one client each there. Brothels may carry cultural barriers which can prevent women from entering. Interviewee 6 (FSW, Bi-sexual, VIC) said that women feel uncomfortable and, Interviewee 9 (Female strip/porn, Queer, NSW) said that it is daunting for women to enter brothels. For female clients seeking full service with a male, there may not be any cis-gendered straight male sex workers in brothels in Australia. Interviewee 13 (NonGiD SW, Queer, VIC) said there are a few transmen in brothels, but it is unknown if they will see female clients. BDSM services appear to be an exception as

Interviewee 13 (Non GiD SW, Queer, VIC) describes their services as typically not dependent on gender with “lots” of female clients attending BDSM brothels.

Day spa extension.

Erotic massage may attract more female than male clients. Interviewee 8, (female masseur [FMas], Bi-sexual, WA) coined the phrase “day spa extension” for women, as an extension of expected female behaviour. Sexual services as day spa extensions are common. Both providers in the study who offer erotic massage said that they saw “a large number” of women; the female provider said that she had fewer male than female clients. Interviewee 8 (F Mas, Bi-sexual, WA) explains that women are encouraged to seek day spa experiences:

I think that by coming to me for an essential massage is an extension of that same process [of encouragement for women to enjoy spa services]. So, it is just taking it one step further in making it a bit more of an intimate service.

Erotic dance.

Sex workers said ratios of female to male clients in porn and stripping, are rapidly increasing, with many new ways for women to be included and involved:

...events like Miss Nude Sydney, I would say it was at least 50% of women there in the audience, if not more. And every year at Pure Platinum where they hold the finals, it is teaming with women and they are pole dance instructors, and the students, curious friends who have been dragged along with boyfriends, supporters who have come to assist with props, women who own or run sex industry businesses who are actively sponsors, women as judges, women also as bar staff (Interviewee 9 F Strip/Porn, Queer, NSW).

Interviewee 9 also said dance fitness classes have overtaken the stripping scene internationally. Dance fitness events held in strip clubs seem to be having an effect on

increasing numbers of women who want to participate as clients of female strippers, at these events and in regular hours at strip clubs.

Physical sex therapy.

The sex workers in this study who provide therapeutic touch services said more women than men may utilise physical sexual therapy services. Many different services may be included as physical sex therapy. These could be counselling with physical touch, such as bodywork, or sex education with touch, such as tantric sex classes. Some sex workers offer a therapeutic service whereby the worker may help a client define and reach particular sexual goals such as achieving penetration for women with vaginismus.

Theoretically, female clients have a full range of sexual services available. In practice however, women have fewer choices of providers than men, due to fewer sex workers of all genders willing to service female clients as well as female reticence to enter regular brothels. Some sex workers consider women's choices may also be affected by the cost of services, as outlined below.

Fees and charges for female sexual services.

Fees for sexual service may affect the accessibility of services for women and may be structured differently for male or female customers. Six of the sexual service providers of the ten who mentioned their fees said they charged the same rates for men and women and usually double for couples. There was one exception; a female sex worker who identifies as gay for pay, who charged more for women because this compensated a more "difficult" service. Three female sex workers charged women less per hour than men.

Interviewee 11 (MSW, Straight, NSW), explained why he charged less generally than counterpart female sex workers; "...basically supply and demand,...the rates that male escorts charge is generally a lot lower". Interviewee 16's (FSW, Queer, NSW) rationale for charging less was:

I have added into my adverts that I offer a discount for single women. That is because my rate [for male clients] is a lot higher than what the male escorts charge and I just thought it is just such a smaller industry that I would like to encourage them.

In business terms, women represent an untapped market for the sex industry.

Encouraging women to buy sex has been taken up by larger sex industry businesses as well:

So some venues will market specifically for women and implement policies to encourage women to attend. Whether that is ladies' nights or free entry for women.

There are also increasing services targeting women like pole dancing, burlesque events or feminist porn sites that offer discounted membership for women, or community magazines or escorts that advertise specifically to women and couples (Interviewee 9 F Strip/Porn, Queer, NSW).

Individual sex workers who charged women less than men may have additional motivations, such as Interviewee 1 (FSW, Same Sex Attracted [SSA], WA) who happily allowed a female client to pay less "because she was really HOT". Interviewee 7 (Male Bodyworker [MBody], QLD), would like to see more women buying sexual services because he considers they would benefit from having sex education and body awareness. Interviewee 3 (FSW, Bi-sexual, ACT), would like to see more women feeling empowered through buying sex. Additionally, Interviewee 9 (F Strip/Porn, Queer, NSW) said:

I will charge less for women. And that is to combat the gender pay gap but it is also to reward women in a sense, for the transgression that is involved in coming to a male dominated space. And there is this great quote by Lily Burana who has a book called *Strip City* and she says it takes real nerve for a woman to come into a strip club and it is a form of female misbehaviour which I think should be richly rewarded.

However, women may pay more per-service regardless of a per hour discount due to the restricted number of service providers available to women and other situational factors.

Interviewee 11 (MSW, Straight, NSW) explained that women may pay more per service, albeit at a lower hourly rate, because individual bookings for women may average longer times and are often in an independent hotel room at the expense of the client. In addition, Interviewee 10, the Scarlet Alliance representative, believes that women have no “budget” or “quickie” type services available to them. Lower priced services include street-based sex work, 15 minute sessions and some brothel services. None of the sex workers interviewed cited any evidence of women accessing these services. One worker, Interviewee 16 (FSW, Queer, NSW), noted; “So, like, the people that don't have as much money just save up for longer and do it less often”. Analysis of the amount that women pay for sex may affect their choices of when and how to buy it, and needs to consider more than simple examination of hourly rates, such as the motivations to buy sex and the types of services bought.

Motivations for Women to Buy Sex

Sex workers in this study were asked what they thought motivated their female clients to pay for their services. In most cases, sex workers described female motivations as the same as male motivations, with only subtle differences. Although people may have multiple motivations to buy sex, the reasons sex workers gave reflected themes regarding sexual desires, learning about sex, therapeutic sex and sex without commitment. In addition, sex workers described some experiences that women do not seek, such as romance and emotional attachment. In this section, I explore sex workers perceptions of their female client's motivations to buy sex and discuss the phenomenon of couples buying sex.

Designer sex.

When a person of any gender buys sex, it is understood that they do not need to consider the sexual needs of the provider. Interviewee 5 (FSW, Pansexual, NSW) explains:

I guess another thing that men and women both like is that you can have whatever you want. Like, you can have it your way. Like, you can pretty much just list all the things

that you enjoy and you will know that it is going to happen, sort of thing. Well, if it is within the girls' boundaries. But yeah. Like, the sessions don't tend to, like, deviate to what the other person wants. It is kind of like all about you. All about the client.

The nature of being a client brings freedom to receive sex exactly as one would like.

Interviewee 8 (F Mas, Bi-sexual, WA) believes that not taking responsibility for sexual partner's needs may be particularly exceptional to women's general experiences:

They're coming, funny enough, they tend to, they tend to be a little bit, star fishy.

Yep. Star fishy, meaning they just kinda lay there. Because it's for the first time, you know, they are coming into an environment where it is all about them. They don't have to worry about pleasing anybody. You know, they don't have to have fellatio, or anything to get what they want. They can come, lay down and get exactly what they want. All of the attention is on them. And believe me, these ladies do revel in that.

The freedom, indeed the expectation, that a client of sexual services will state their expectations and desires means that women buying sex can design their own experiences without regard for the desires of their partner.

Educational sex.

While every sexual act has potential to teach and inform the participants, irrespective of gender, some of the sex workers thought that women take up specific sexual educational services more readily than men. For example:

I provide a tantric massage. Yep. Which is a very sensual massage, the whole idea is to connect on a much deeper level than just the physical. And I do tend to find that a lot of women are very interested in that, and I think that women are probably designed and have a natural affinity for that. So, I do find that a lot of my clients are you know very interested in learning more about Tantra than, say some gentlemen are (Interviewee 8, F Mas, Bi-sexual, WA).

Therapeutic sex.

A multitude of sexual services are marketed to all genders as forms of sex therapy. The difference between sex therapy and sexual services in Australian laws regards the incidence of touching. Interviewee 17 (MSW, Straight, NSW) explains his service:

I get a number of women, a significant portion, I guess, who come to me, who are either virgins or have issues in their past sexually, like abuse or very bad or traumatic relationships, where they have been run down and made to feel worthless. This is often women, well women between 20 and mid to late 30's. Ah, so they come to me to rebuild their trust in themselves and in men. So they are not coming to me just to have a sexual experience, they are coming to me to repair something in themselves, in their life, in their sexuality. So that is a very different kind of client-worker relationship to, um, a lot of my other clients, who are coming to me simply, not simply, but who are coming to me for an experience that is primarily physical.

Physical sex therapy is not a new concept, but five of the sex workers in this study say it is a growing market for all genders.

The construction of a commercial sex transaction as therapeutic might rationalise possible emotional risks to women. Regarding strip clubs, for example, Interviewee 9 (F Strip/Porn, Queer, NSW) said that women risk feeling unentitled to be in traditional male spaces, being fetishized by male customers, being the only female customer or not be considered a genuine client by workers. However, it is possible that some women experience a sense of exercising their consumer power when buying services which challenge female roles. On a more personal level, Interviewee 13 (Non GID SW, Queer, VIC) said transwomen who have bought sex expressed a need of acceptance about their bodies and their gender. While emotional safety for transwomen buying sex is not a focus of this study, similar issues may be of relevance to all women.

Professional hook-up.

A notion that women can get sex whenever they want it, such as having a *hook-up*, pervades perceptions of women who buy sex. Women who buy sex have been depicted in media as desperate or unable to pick-up due to low social desirability (Bindel, 2003).

Interviewee 11 (MSW, Straight, NSW), explicitly stated that his female clients were not desperate and unable to attain sex in other ways. Four sex workers in the study explained without prompting why women might prefer to buy sex rather than hooking-up. They stated several reasons such as being married or otherwise requiring discretion, or they desired a sexpert or a person they considered to be “out of their league”. They also wanted choices and were honest about what they were doing, or they said they have safety and trust issues or disabilities that hindered a hook-up. For instance:

If a woman were to buy sex from a man, you can; you feel a little safer with a man that you have paid for. Because I mean, they don't really care if you are not into something. Or something like that, whereas if you pick up in a pub, you can get any crazy drongo who wants what he wants, when he wants it, sort of thing (Interviewee 5, FSW, Pansexual, NSW).

Addressing concerns about emotional intimacy, Interviewee 4 (FSW, Gay for Pay, QLD) stated that, like men, women “pay you to leave” after sex. Most of Interviewee 8’s (F Mass, Bi-sexual, WA) female clients are in committed relationships, needing only to experience physical intimacy from her. Interviewee 14, a gay male sex worker, considers that women find emotional intimacy in their friendships and other relationships, negating their requirement for commercialised emotional connection. Buying sex is a convenient way to experience intimacy without commitment. An exception was one sex worker, Interviewee 3 (FSW, Bi-sexual, ACT) who currently has a long term female client who has developed an emotional attachment, although this was not her initial motivation.

Some women prefer not to source free sex via a hook-up leaving fewer options for sexual experiences. Women who live with disabilities that prevent them from experiencing physical relationships may also buy sex. Only one of the sex workers interviewed for this study specifically stated that he works with women with disabilities. He imparted:

There are people with disabilities that have had a really rough journey for a long, long time because they are vulnerable and they live in a society where people just didn't give a damn and didn't listen to them and didn't look after their needs... working with people with disabilities, women with disabilities is the hardest work that I do, without exception. It is emotionally very draining. And it is physically very draining because my clients with disabilities, the majority have cerebral palsy...so they need 24/7 care and are not even able to roll over. They are completely dependent on carers or me to do everything for them (Interviewee 17, MSW, Straight, NSW).

Interviewee 17 said that he is one of two or three male sex workers in NSW who specialise in women with disabilities. Although women with disabilities have the same motivations to buy sex as other women, they may not have any other choices, including having no choice to self-pleasure.

Sex workers in this study provided numerous and notable examples of women approaching the buying of sex with safety foremost in mind. Interviewee 8 (F Mas, Bi-sexual, WA) explains in more detail:

Yeah, they are trying to get a sense of, "what am I walking into? What am I opening myself up to? Is this person a professional and/or are they just a scam to, you know, rob me?" As a woman we think of all these silly, silly, silly things but it's unfortunate, the reality that we live in. Yeah. ... and because of the society we live in, we just have an innate sense of danger because we are prone to be attacked.

Male sex workers also noted safety as an issue for female clients. Interviewee 15 (MSW, Straight, VIC) explained:

If you just want sex, you can go and get that. They will come and I've said that to a few people and they have said, "well, I've tried, but you are safe, this is safe". So they are paying for safety. They are paying for trust.

Physical safety includes consideration of sexual health and safer sex practises. This study, although qualitative with small sample size, asked male sex workers about condom use with female clients and found 100% reported condom compliance. Female-to-female sex is perceived to be low risk and six of seven full-service female sex workers in this study reported that they do not use dams for oral sex. Nonetheless, most female sex workers said they perform a visual health check, insist on prior showering, and use gloves and condoms for all penetrative activity. Considering the number of questions that potential clients ask about safety, Interviewee 5 (FSW Pansexual NSW) demonstrated a potential problem when asked if women talk about safe sex, "Um, no". Women buying sex from male sex workers seem more aware of sexual health issues than with respect to female-to-female interactions.

Couples buying sex.

Couples who buy sex together are not the focus of this study. However, analysis of gendered initiations and motivations to buy sex are of interest. Sex workers reported that couples of all genders and orientations buy sex from all genders. The gender of person initiating commercial sex in heterosexual couples varied. For example Interviewee 1 (FSW, SSA, WA) said that "the man does the booking", and Interviewee 2 (FSW, Lesbian, NSW) said that females more often initiated couples bookings. Interviewee 16 (FSW, Queer, NSW), explains the female motivations for couples booking in her experience:

...so I do have women who like want, I get a lot of first time women who are in a straight relationship and they come to me for a threesome, but it is because the woman

has had fantasies about other women for years and I am quite often the first experience for a women. So, in those cases, she is quite curious to explore my vagina because she has never done that before.

Women who buy sex from women to satisfy their bi-curiosity may do so with a male partner for support and may or may not have a secondary benefit of satisfying voyeuristic desires.

Male sex workers who had client couples described varied relationship dynamics. Interviewee 17 (MSW, Straight, NSW) explained that often, when a male arranged a “couples” booking, the female partner was “not as invested in performance sex for her partner’s pleasure, but would usually enjoy a threesome with both men”. Interviewee 11 (MSW, Straight, NSW) also described threesomes but suggests that it is more often the woman’s idea:

I might take the women into the bedroom for a while and we might start basically foreplay or oral or even building up to full intercourse before the man will join with the women. Because, I meet a lot of women who have the idea of the two guy/one girl threesome. A lot of times the husband will also like it as well.

Voyeuristic desire is not necessarily the exclusive domain of men, as Interviewee 14, (MSW, Gay, NSW) explained, “it first happened with a male client who wanted, or his wife wanted, to come to watch or to watch and join in”.

During examination of the *motivations to buy sex* theme in this project, it became apparent that sex workers also noted some aspects of buying sex that their female clients did not want, such as romance.

Romantic motivations.

Some straight male sex worker advertising panders to stereotypes about women requiring romance before sex. Interviewee 15, a straight male sex worker (VIC) explains what he thinks of some of these advertising strategies:

This idea of romance, I've seen some adverts that men have put up, these male escorts have put up, and it is embarrassing. It really is embarrassing. The way they talk about how they will treat a women, how they will whisk her away, and how they will bring roses. They have this romance in the language that they use. And, women are not looking for that. They are not looking for that. They are looking for connection. And you don't get connection through romance.

Interviewee 15's experience with female clients is more pragmatic than romantic.

While a market for romance and social dates is likely to exist for women, commercial sex is highly-priced, time-limited, and unlikely to involve lengthy courtship gestures. Interviewee 10, Scarlet Alliance Rep said romantic heterosexual marketing to women may look like a different service than marketing directed toward men, but services were similar.

Female Client Interactions with Sex Workers

Sex workers were asked how they thought the behaviour of men and women differed when buying sex and they overwhelmingly described female clients as playing a client role which is non-gendered. Sex workers' expectations of gendered behaviour may play a part in their experiences of actual behaviour. For example, Interviewee 2 (FSW, Lesbian, NSW) said:

I saw the client who was a lesbian. Yeah, I thought, wow, this is going to be really different and afterwards it was really interesting to realise that it was a lot like any other client. You know, you are still working, maintaining control of the situation.

You are still asserting your boundaries; you are still watching the time.

The role of sex worker remains the same, regardless of the gender of client. Sex workers may however, feel differently about clients based on gender, such as Interviewee 6 (FSW, Bi-sexual, VIC), who said, "I didn't feel like it was that different because she was a woman. I think I just cared more. [laughing] Yeah, and it was her first time". The sexual orientation of

sex workers may or may not have relevance to their feelings about the gender of their clients as demonstrated by the verbatim orientation descriptors presented in quotations in this chapter. This means, using the words *same sex attracted*, because the interviewee identified their sexual orientation using those words. In addition, sex workers expectations of gendered behaviour may also affect their service delivery, for example:

Yeah, and that surprised me as well. When I first had women coming in, I kind of toned it down a little bit. Because, I assumed that they would not be able to handle it, but after a while I just started treating them like men because, I mean, they seemed to be fine with it. Yeah. (Interviewee 5, FSW, Pansexual, NSW)

Sex workers were asked more specific questions about client's gender performance and identified slight variations in gendered behaviour when booking a service, in different service situations as well as with client's use of language, in experiences of stigmatisation and client's strategies to maintain boundaries and gain consent.

How women bought sex.

The question of how women find out about the possibility of buying sex for themselves was asked of sex workers. Notwithstanding the diversity of sex worker business operations, the most common way that female clients were perceived to make the decision to buy sex was through referral and personal recommendation. Of the 15 currently active sex workers interviewed, seven cited referrals and personal recommendations as their client's main pathway. Referrals included written or verbal suggestions from a psychologist or other health professional, and personal recommendations included knowing a sex worker, being a current or former sex worker, or attendance at stripping and other events in the queer and "sex positive" communities.

The 13 sex workers in this study, who see clients of all genders, said that the women who saw them appeared to do more research than men. Nine thought the extra research done

by women may reflect perceived risks to women's safety, as a result of navigating fake, hopeful or predatory advertisements, or that few genuine straight male workers are available. Two male and one female sex worker(s) in the study work through agencies and suggest the key marketing approach of their agencies is to emphasise personal safety for female clients. However, most sexual service advertising is not directed toward women and some services may not appear to be available to women. Therefore, online research by potential female clients clarifies which services are available and includes perusal of sexual service websites, and reviewing and engaging with sex worker social media presence such as tweets and blogging. Interviewee 9 (F Strip/porn, Queer, NSW) considers that women's online research for sexual services might influence the market offering porn for women which assumes a female preference for more cultivated and ethical sexual service delivery.

The sex workers interviewed for this study consistently described women who buy sex as not having a "commercial sex script"; they are not taught a language of negotiating sex. Interviewee 9 (F Strip/Porn Queer NSW) illustrates how inexperienced women appear:

I think, it is interesting when women come into strip clubs, they are not familiar with strip club etiquette; they don't know that we are not paid there, to be doing podiums. They don't know that tipping is customary, or they might not understand that the tipping chairs up the front are usually for people who are actively tipping and sometimes they are outraged when they realise that you are there for free and then they get out their wallets.

Women do not have an expected tradition of commercial sex use, and thus are unlikely to be familiar with protocols and customs that define good manners. Interviewee 7 (MBody, QLD) explained that commercial sex etiquette is unlikely to be learned through female discussion groups at the pub, nor are online escort review sites habitually accessed by women.

Lacking knowledge of etiquette places women at a disadvantage relative to men with respect to facilitating a commercial sex transaction. Furthermore, lacking knowledge of sex industry services may influence services bought. For example, Interviewee 15, says; “They don't know what they are looking for and they don't know what they need” (MSW, Straight, VIC). One of the ways that women attempt to bridge the knowledge gap is to ask a lot of questions. Interviewee 8 (F Mas, Bi-sexual, WA) describes this:

If there is something that they are unclear about, they are quite happy to ask a silly question so that they can get a clarification. So they could understand, you know, what is going to happen. They want details, asking you “what kind of massage?” You know, “how are you going to? What kind of oils are you going to use? Is there shower facilities? Are there clean towels?”.

Interviewee 8 does not feel that men ask a similar number or type of questions. Interviewee 1 (FSW, SSA, WA) said; “They also discuss what they desire more than men. ‘Can I use a strap on, on you?’, and, ‘Can I use my fingernails on you?’ (They always have nice clean, short nails, not like men)”. Due to the apparent likely recent uptake of women buying sexual services, it appears that more female clients are doing so for the first time than male clients. Both female and male sex workers expressed that women buying sex for the first time are nervous, and need encouragement to ask for what they want and may spend more time considering options than men. The following examples of booking behaviour from a male and a female sex worker illustrate this:

Well, the main things I get is - nerves. And, it is either when they start talking to me, or if I have an agency booking, it will be at the beginning of the booking. So, they will say “I haven't done this before, um I am really nervous”. And those are the two first things that I hear most times (Interviewee 15 MSW, Straight, VIC).

...and then when she calls you, she usually has a host of questions for you. Well it's true! They generally don't book right away. They ask the questions and then they go away and think about it and then they call when they are ready to book. Yeah, it is a much longer process with female clients than it is with males (Interviewee 8 FMs, Bi-sexual, WA).

Whether to bridge a knowledge gap, a symptom of nervousness, or a technique to keep someone talking to further weigh-up the integrity of the service provider, it seems like women ask more questions than men, do more research and are more likely to seek personal recommendations and referrals.

Service and situational factors.

Sex workers described female client behaviour to be influenced by the type of services they buy. Interviewee 13 (NonGID SW, Queer, VIC) stated:

To be honest, um, people are just so varied and unique across the board that I don't, it doesn't tie down hugely to the genders. I mean, maybe that is because I am working in BDSM at the moment it is just so different from person to person because people's fetishes and individual masochist experience differ so wildly. In terms of doing vanilla sex, sex work, I think, yeah there is probably more gender distinction in terms of how people express what they want and interact.

Interviewee 10 (Scarlet Alliance Rep) says that differences in people's socio-economic, cultural or religious identities impact on sexual behaviour more than gender. Additionally, some client roles may carry less expectation of gender norms than others. Female client conduct in day spas, strip clubs, with escorts, and in brothels is described below.

In a day spa situation, or with a private escort, women were described as having diverse behaviour. Interviewee 16 (FSW, Queer, NSW) explains, "my experience that overall women are more than happy to lie back and receive and just appreciate that it is their time to

receive [sexual contact]”. Others, are ready to take more control, “Oh God no, I've had a few that I've had to pry off me! [laughing]” (Interviewee 13, NonGID SW, Queer, VIC). An anecdotal example of demanding behaviour is provided by Interviewee 4 (FSW, Gay for Pay, QLD):

But when male workers are only working with female clients, that they said to me that, the women who ring up are always wanting to know what size their member is! ...Yeah. So, I suppose in a way they are very similar because guys want to know what size you are, how big your boobs are... Yeah, they [women] want the inches.

None of the male sex workers in this study mentioned that women ask about penis size, meaning that women might not ask, or they do and it is not unusual because it is expected that clients would want to know details about workers and is therefore, unremarkable.

Other sex workers also said the occasional female client can be disrespectful or aggressive. Interviewee 12 (MSW, Straight for Pay, NSW) was laughing when he reported, “I was also once hired by two girls who were a couple who were bull dykes who fucked me with a strap on, and it was like, whoa!”. In addition, Interviewee 4 (FSW, Gay for Pay, QLD) said, “Um, they [women] are definitely more soft in their approach but at other times, like for example, the gay girl, she was an animal”. More generally, Interviewee 6 (FSW, Bi-sexual, VIC) said, “I have had um, friends who have had really horrible experiences with female clients. Um, and in that respect, they were no different than, you know, male ugly mugs”. However, in the interview data, there were no first hand experiences of female *ugly mugs* or people who behave in ways that cause a sex worker to be concerned about their safety or boundaries being respected.

In strip venues, where female behaviour can be observed, female group dynamics may influence and challenge women's expected sexual roles. As was reported in scholarly literature in the first chapter, women in strip clubs behaved differently when by themselves or

when in groups and also when in the presence of men. Individually, and when in traditional male spaces, some women are still developing their *female gaze*. Interviewee 9 (FStrip/Porn, Queer, NSW) explains:

Um, and as women maybe we haven't learnt to sit in silence and just watch or just be a voyeur and that feeling is a little alien or uncomfortable for them because they don't want to appear sleazy.

The gaze is not simply seeing someone through a sexualised frame. It is the voyeur, the willingness to accept normally private visual stimuli in a public setting, without reciprocation (Pilcher, 2012). Having a proud gaze is a willingness to be seen, seeing.

Groups of women, particularly at female only strip events, appear to celebrate their female gaze. Interviewee 9 (FStrip/Porn, Queer, NSW) contrasts her earlier comment about individual women, now speaking about groups of women in female only spaces:

So, in my experience, women really love watching other women perform elaborate stage shows.... And, the women also enjoy really dirty stage shows, too...a celebration of very hypersexualised down and dirty, slutty, stripperesque pole dancing and it is a really massive hit because there are so few spaces in which women are permitted to be unrepentant and brash about their sexuality and it is just full of women who enjoy watching others writhe around the floor and just be shamelessly sexual.

Further, groups of women in strip clubs when in the company of men and women, can behave aggressively. Such as:

Then, when women are in groups, sometimes they can be very boisterous. And, very grabby. Women often haven't been socialised with the strip club etiquette, so they don't understand that they can't just grab at your vagina. And people also haven't grown up learning a language of sexual communication, so often don't have the vocabulary to ask permission, or express their desires, or to negotiate a transaction.

Women at hen's parties are often quite drunk and unruly and very often cross boundaries, and being in that group environment provides them permission to do things that they would never do on their own (Interviewee 9, FStrip/Porn, Queer, NSW).

The experiences of Interviewee 9, who has observed women's behaviour in different settings, illustrates situational variations in conduct.

A further service related reason for gendered behaviour distinctions could be due to biological factors. In particular, some sexual acts that women desire may not be as straightforward as straight male services. A standard heterosexual full-service usually involves digital then oral stimulation, culminating in penis-in-vagina intercourse. Activities that are standard in heterosexual services may not apply when women buy sex from women, trans-people or in BDSM and other services which do not focus on vaginal intercourse.

Sex workers generally felt the type of service women bought affected client behaviour and that women were less assertive than men overall. A further difference noted between male and female clients were communication styles.

Verbal communication.

Sex workers acknowledged gendered difference in the language used by male and female clients. For example:

Interviewer: Have your female clients behaved in the same way as men do when they buy sex?

Interviewee 4 (FSW, Gay for pay, QLD): Speaking from myself, I would say, yes. Pretty much, I mean their words are different, they use different wording, but their manners are the same, you know, there might be a bit of nervousness.

Interviewee 4 identified the use of language as the main gender difference with her clients. Gendered language differences may be subtle and go unnoticed. Further probing questions

were asked of sex workers about language differences. For example, Interviewee 15 (MSW, Straight, VIC) explained:

Interviewer: And do they use like, words of romance like, “let's make love” rather than sex?

Interviewee 15: No. Never. Never. I don't think they even use the word sex.

Interviewer: What [language] do you think they use?

Interviewee 15: Well, we talk about making a booking. We talk about booking in a script. This is yes, yes, at the end of the day you are doing this study on women who are paying for sex. But, that is not really ever what women call to talk about...It is never, there is very rarely an open statement like “hey, **** can I book you for sex?” That just doesn't happen.

The degree with which female clients use euphemisms might be a reflection of socialised sensitivities. Further, Interviewee 6 (FSW, Bi-sexual, VIC) said:

I would say that men sometimes use different language than women. Not really that it is women using different language than men. Some men, and I would probably...because they watch a lot of porn, they get the porno language. But it is talking about cock and pussy and, “can I do this?” You know, the whole dirty talking thing, which I am not very good at and I struggle to keep a straight face. [laughing] But I haven't really encountered that too much in women, that sort of language, um that kind of explicit language that you would see in pornography. I haven't really encountered that in women.

It is of interest that Interviewee 6 frames male language as different, possibly because porno language is not generally used in non-sexual social situations. Although it is possible for women to speak in porno talk, none of the sex workers in this study noted this.

Gendered language variations may be intrinsic to gender role performance despite women challenging gender roles when they buy sex. Interviewee 9 (FStrip/Porn, Queer, NSW) considers further reasons for gendered difference as:

Often women will not ask direct questions about a certain service or they will use language that is like, more indirect than men. They will ask for a dance or ask for a show in more sort of general terms. So I think, yeah, there are so many aspects to it, like yeah, that really goes back to a lack of sex education...And a lack of specifically sex education that teaches negotiation and communication and boundaries um, and how to assert or ask for what you want. How to say yes, as well as how to say no.

In addition to demonstrating female indirect language, Interviewee 9 makes a connection between sex education and sexual communication; sex education contributes to socialisation which may inform gendered behaviour. Sex workers said that women generally used softer, less direct language than male clients.

Boundary adherence and ensuring consent.

Adherence to boundaries requires communication and understanding and may be a benefit of women asking disproportionate amounts of questions than men. Interviewee 5 (FSW, Pansexual, NSW) said that some women come with a list of desires which may provide scaffolding for a discussion of boundaries. Clear communication of boundaries gives clients and workers an understanding of each other's needs and desires.

Whether due to inexperience or a gendered difference, sex workers in this study said that women who buy sex are less likely than men to push boundaries or haggle prices. For example, "Yeah, so they don't argue the price, they don't argue what you will and won't do...um...no" (Interviewee 6, FSW, Bi-sexual, VIC). In another example:

I think once you have explained to females about dental dams and risks, I think that we accept that as part of the service and it wouldn't be questioned whereas men tend

to question that. "Are you sure you can't give me oral without a condom? Are you sure you can't take extra money for no condoms for sex?" Whereas, I don't think women would be, would push that boundary. They are less confrontation, much more willing to go, "well, here are the rules", and they are happy to play within them.

Whereas men will push that risk (Interview 3, FSW, Bi-sexual, ACT).

Boundary adherence encompasses good manners, using clear communication and negotiation and understanding the sexual service as a business transaction.

Regarding consent, sex workers said that women are more aware of consent issues than men and will "check-in" regularly. For instance:

I probably would say that women would maybe check with me that things were OK, like kind of confirming consent, in a way, for things. Like, "is this OK? Like, can I do this?" Or, "let's do this, what do you think?" Things like that. You know, and I have a lot of male clients who do that too, but maybe they could possibly do a little bit more of. Yeah, so.... Yeah, I think understanding of consent is very different for men and women. Like men might think that if they have consent for sex, they have got consent for everything, but women have been on the receiving end of that and are more aware that consent is not universal (Interviewee 6, FSW, Bi-sexual, VIC).

Gaining consent is not a simple permission gaining exercise. Consent negotiation clarifies roles and goals such as a focus on orgasm or pleasure. Interviewee 16 (FSW, Queer, NSW) said:

Yeah, I think women, in my experience, they seem to have less of a guilt thing around it. Um, I think guys feel guilty and insist, like insisting that I get off as well, it's like they want to pretend that I am not there for the money and I have to pretend that I love sex every day and I am doing it because I love sex and kind of pretend that it is not about the money. Whereas women, they are, they don't seem to be as bothered as the,

that fact that I am being paid to be there and I am being paid to pleasure them. It doesn't seem to make them react in the way that men do.

Consent negotiation assists in communication of emotional as well as physical boundaries. Interviewee 16 says client projection of guilt and shame affecting boundary setting and consent occurs differently in her male and female clients. This is not to say however, that women may not suffer guilt or shame about buying sex, which they may feel for different reasons. It is possible that some male clients react to social perceptions of unequal power dynamics with sex workers to which, female clients are immune.

Power dynamics in commercial sex have been a focus of academic and social debate and have been a feature throughout this thesis. All sex workers in this study indicated that they had provider power. They had power to set their own boundaries and determine the service that they sold to all genders. Their authority continued throughout the service. When women demand commercial sex, consumer power is separated from gendered power. Four sex workers in the study, two male and two female, said that women who buy sex can feel powerful by having choices to buy sex; when, how and with whom. Such as: "They know that they have the choice about whether to see me again. They know that I don't know them" Interviewee 15 (MSW, Straight, VIC). A woman's ability to control her sexuality may bring new confidence to further empower her in future and in non-commercial relationships.

Interviewee 15 continues:

[Male sex worker tells female client] "I will be in control and take the reins but you always have ultimate control over the situation". And, that is quite a difficult and new experience for women. 'Cause, so much of the sex that they know is male dominated, is subservient... and so they are trying to reverse that while still within a male/female relationship and in intimate experience, is quite tricky for some people. But as long as

I remind them and encourage them and coax them, then they sometimes learn to talk, and to ask for certain things (Interviewee 15, MSW, Straight, VIC).

The last subtle gendered difference found in this study is one which has potential to steal power. The stigmatisation of buying sex effectively prevents some women from buying it, creates difficulties for those who do and may well affect the safety of all stakeholders.

Stigma.

Sex workers thought that women who buy sex are not considered to be like other women. Interviewee 10 (Scarlet Alliance Rep, NSW) says, “I think, um it is still understood as unusual maybe even odd, maybe even unacceptable”. Also, Interviewee 13 (NonGID SW, Queer, VIC) said, “It's still very much considered unusual for women to be considered as customers. Absolutely. And, I think there is that perception that, because it is unusual, that there must be something wrong”. To be more frank, Interviewee 4 (FSW, Gay for Pay, QLD) said, “Oh, I think they will probably just treat them like us, dirty sluts”. Women who buy sex challenge notions about female sexuality.

Additional foundations of stigmatization for women buying sex lie in exploitation narratives about the sex industry. Sex workers had much to say about how they related to these narratives and the effect on their clients:

So the fact that a few women are “breaking the rules”, in quotation marks and buying sex. That is going to be seen as an anomaly because there is a focal point is always going to be on the male exploitation of the female, which is such bullshit. I mean, trust me, I am the least exploited person you will ever meet [laughing] (Interviewee 8, FMas, Bi-sexual, WA).

...the whole criminalise the client Nordic model rescue industry nonsense. It paints a picture to me of a world where people will tell whatever story they want to tell, like 'um, trafficking, you know the human trafficking things... is a really popular angle of

attack these days. Saying that all prostitution is bad because it is all trafficking, it supports trafficking of women and girls and so forth. All of these arguments ignore, or attempt to disguise the basic goal of most of these people which is to outlaw prostitution, the sex trade buying and selling sex. So it is abolitionism, and they dress it up in a bunch of different moral disguises of “oh, think of the children”. They appeal to emotion, blah blah blah they are not being honest. They are dishonest in what they say and what they are trying to achieve. And they try to dress it up in morality. Um, and that hurts everyone. It hurts my clients who, as I have been saying, have genuine needs that are not being met in any way by society (Interviewee 17, MSW, Straight, NSW).

The effect of stigma, often perpetrated by exploitation arguments, surrounds everything to do with the purchase of sex and particularly for women, appears to be a crucial element for women who have, or might buy sex in Australia. This theme will be further examined by asking women who have bought sex about their experiences.

Summary

This description of how sex workers view women who buy sexual services in Australia emphasises a growing market of diverse clientele. Clearly, fewer women currently buy sex than men in Australia. It is likely that the female market is increasing, however in the absence of a baseline study, and in view of the nature of this small qualitative study, the claim is speculative.

Sex workers were unanimous in their assertions that women who buy sex are diverse and do not fit any stereotype, ethnicity, income group or age. Motivations were not romantic or delusional. Women buy sex to get sex exactly how they want it, on their own terms and with a sexpert. They buy therapeutic services to learn or recover from physical or emotional

states that interfere with sexual function. Some women prefer to buy sex rather than having casual sex to have more control over their safety and sexual experience.

Men and women do not necessarily buy sex in the same ways. Women prefer referrals, agencies and therapeutic spa services. Women have fewer choices of providers, particularly male, although the same types of services are available to all. Women may buy sex from female providers more often than male in Australia. The price of sex for women was the same or lower per hour than men, in almost all sex workers interviewed. Although, on average, women were often compelled to pay for longer or more expensive services due to no availability of low budget services or few brothel services, and frequently, a requirement to book an independent hotel room.

Sex workers spoke about subtle differences in gender role expression of customers who bought sex. Above all, the consumer role was more indicative of behaviour than gender. Some sexual services are not affected by any heteronormative expression because penetration with a penis is not a particular goal. Socio-economic, cultural or religious differences also have more bearing on sexual behaviour than gender. Gender differences were noted regarding levels of demand in the language of negotiating sex, the number of questions asked to address knowledge deficits and to navigate safety, and compliance with boundaries and consent. Women's expressions of sexual enjoyment in public venues can be timid or aggressive depending on situation and motivational factors. Women who buy sex reverse gender power dynamics that occur in heteronormative relationships, and may be customising their own methods of buying sexual services.

Chapter 8

Voices of Women Who Buy Sex

The interviews of women who experienced buying sexual services were analysed with an interpretative phenomenological approach and the results inform this chapter. The characteristics of the women who were interviewed are described, along with the ways they went about buying sex and, the types of sex they bought. To acknowledge them as the experts in their own lives, their voices are heard through verbatim quotes throughout the chapter. The reasons they bought sex and the things they found difficult about buying sex are examined. The insights the women expressed after buying sex are also explored. Lastly, this chapter reports an analysis of why these women wanted to participate in the study through asking what social change they would advocate if they had freedom to speak without consequence.

Purposive Sample

The sample of women who bought sex were selected using a purposive sample and are tabled in Appendix J. The first two women who bought sex were also sex workers who were interviewed as key informants. The experiential interviews for these interviewees occurred immediately following their key informant interview in order to save the participant time and effort. The remainder of the interviews resulted from advertising through social media sharing and in online escort advertising spaces. Purposive sampling evolved gradually and in clusters as like-minded potential participants shared the study link on social media.

The second group of volunteer interviewees had bought BDSM and multiple other services. Advertising was tweaked to attract participants who had bought sex with male sex workers and resulted in another cluster of volunteers. Advertising was re-tweaked to attract participants who had bought sex with female sex workers, resulting in the last cluster of volunteer interviewees and theoretical saturation.

The sample of women interviewed included 21 female identifying people including one trans-identifying woman. Figure 8.1 represents the ages of the interviewees at the time of interview and at the time of buying sex. Ages ranged from 18 to 69, with 12 women under 45 the first time they bought sex and nine over 45. This sample suggests a trend of younger women buying sex, however the sample size is small.

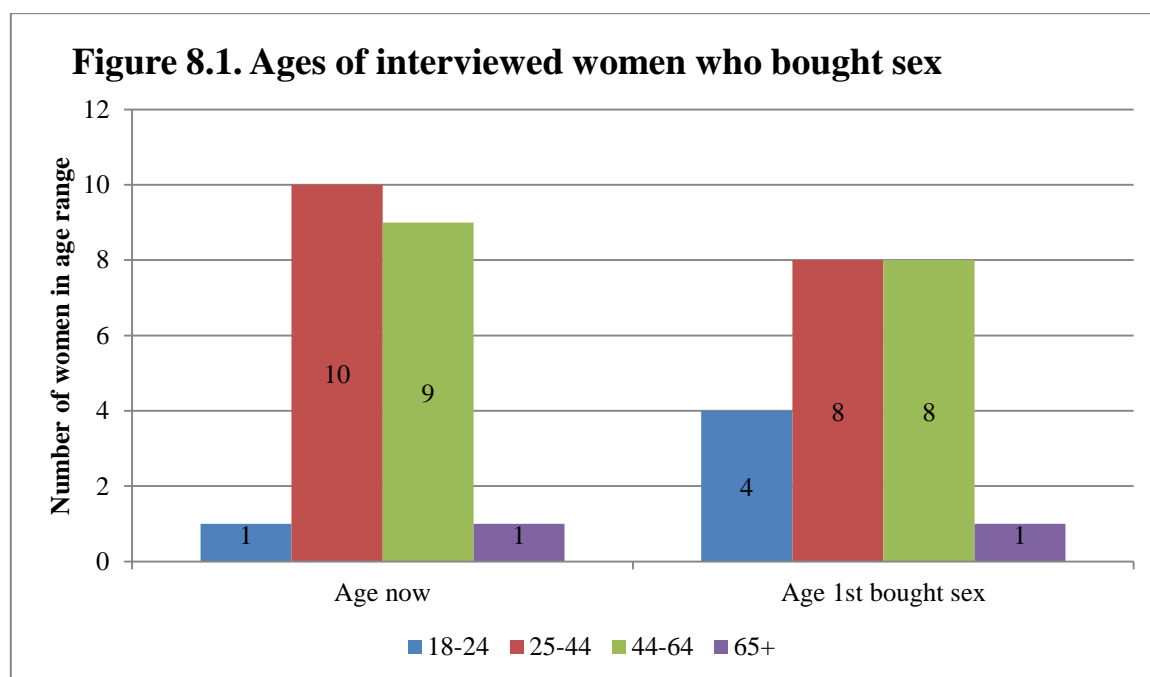


Figure 8.1 Ages of Interviewees at the time of interview and at the time they first bought sex. Standard international age classifications from the United Nations (1982) have been used.

Other demographics of the sample include where they live, their educational status, relationship status, ethnicity and, income levels. Nine women were from NSW, seven from VIC, two from SA and one each from QLD, ACT and WA. Most states of Australia are represented in the sample with limited evidence of greater activity in NSW and VIC. Three of the interviewees did not say their education level. Three other interviewees had secondary schooling, four were university graduates and 11 had post-graduate qualifications. Several interviewees had been buying sex for several years while in and out of various personal relationships. At the time of interview, 12 described themselves as single and nine as partnered, some in open relationships. All 21 of the interviewees were Caucasian. The study

advertisements may have attracted more Caucasian women than others, or Caucasian women may be more likely to buy sex in Australia. Income levels were high for seven, medium for seven, medium to low for four interviewees and three said they had low incomes. The trend in this sample is Caucasian women with higher education and higher incomes. This small sample size can only suggest these demographics and does not speak for all women who buy sex.

How they went about buying sex?

Slightly less than half of the women who bought sex in this sample (10 of 21) knew a sex worker or allowed someone else to research services. Three were current sex workers, and one of these had bought sex for several years prior to becoming a sex worker. Two other women had worked in the sex industry in the past. For the six women who had paid for threesomes, three allowed their partners to research the particular services they bought. Two women who bought sex had contact with sexology communities which may have influenced their use of sexual services.

A slight majority of the women in this sample (11 of 21) had no contact with the sex industry prior to buying sex. Three bought sex prior to the internet age and used newspapers for research. Most interviewees specifically cited Google as their main research tool and seven cited a single newspaper article on the topic, written by Silver (2013b), which is still prominent in a Google search in 2018. There were many magazine and newspaper articles in Australia in 2013, cited in Chapter 2 of this thesis, including those regarding the controversial relationship status of Rhonda and Ketut in the AAMI advertisements.

Which kind of sexual services did they buy?

Almost all the women in the sample had bought sex multiple times. The services they sought were heterosexual sex (13), same-sex attracted sex (7), threesomes with all genders (6), bondage and discipline (BDSM) (4), and body work therapy (2). As indicated in Figure

8.2 below, women who bought multiple types of services were least likely to see a male sex worker on their own. And, women who saw male sex workers on their own were least likely to pursue other types of sexual services.

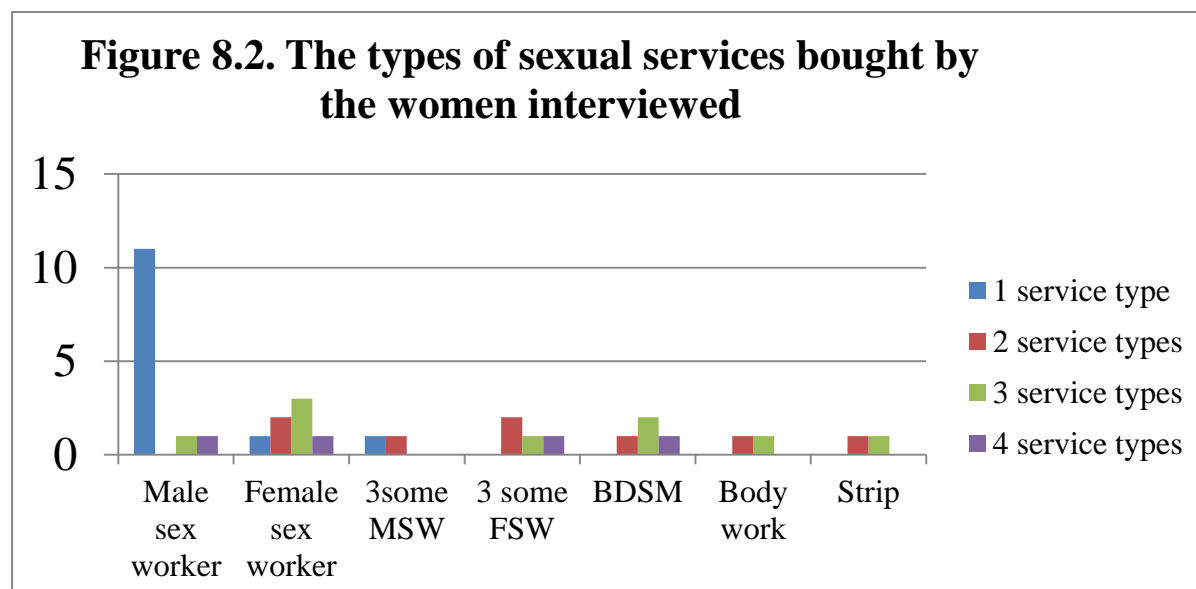


Figure 8.2. The types of services women bought are plotted via the number of different types of services bought.

Although the sample is almost equally divided into heterosexual women and women of more flexible orientations, there does not appear to be any particular difference in demographics between the two groups except in age. The average age of the women who only sought heterosexual services was 44 and the average age of the women who were flexible in their sexual choices was 35. Of the women seeking same sex attracted services (7), about half indicated that they were exploring their orientation and only two identified as lesbian. Of the interviewees who bought sex with partners or friends as a threesome (6), three did so as a result of the male partner's idea and two went onto buying sex independently.

The characteristics of the women who bought sex in this study demonstrate diversity, except in ethnicity. The interviews were conducted using methods to allow each participant to highlight what was important for them. Most interviewees chose to tell a chronologic story about how they came to buy sex, what happened when they bought sex and how they felt

about it at the time of interview. Minimal questions were asked to get clarification or more specific information. During data analysis, themes clearly emerged in each of the sections on motivations and barriers to buying sex, and in the outcomes experienced.

Motivators – Push and Pull Factors

The motivations and barriers to buying sex were explored through analysis and are reported here. Although the women interviewed had all successfully bought sex, they also wanted to mention factors that made buying sex more difficult.

Motivations to buy sex.

The women interviewed gave several reasons each why they bought sex. Almost half the sample (10 of 21) framed their primary motivations as therapeutic. The second major reason for buying sex was for fun and entertainment (8), and other important reasons were also mentioned such as for safety, to experience intimacy, and to learn. There is obvious, yet subjective, cross-over in motivations such as, a desire to learn and therapy. The results reported here reflect each interviewee's interpretations of their motivations.

Therapy.

The most common overall reason for buying sexual services in this cohort (10 of 21) was cited as therapy. Underlying conditions indicating a need for therapy were, vaginismus (3), healing from intimate partner violence (3), healing from childhood sexual abuse (2), "trans issues" (1), and depression and stress (1). The combined goals of therapy were, to achieve physical penetration, to learn about bodies and sexuality, and to practise good sexual communication around boundaries and consent. Two interviewees indicated that sex was not important to them but relationships were important to them. For example, "I can't have a relationship because I can't fuck. You know?" (Interviewee 16). Several interviewees felt sexual services should be rebatable from Medicare (an example is Interviewee 11). Two interviewees forgot about buying somatic ("hands on") sex therapy in the past until they were

interviewed about current commercial sex activity (Interviewee 4 and 5). Three interviewees objected to the idea that they were buying sex at all, and one separated all fun and pleasure from her therapeutic experience. As if speaking to a sex worker, Interviewee 12 said, “Look, I am here for physio”. The four interviewees who were under psychological care at the time of buying sex, had the positive regard of their psych professionals and all cited their motivations to buy sex to be for therapy.

Entertainment.

The major motivation to buy sex for eight interviewees was to have fun and experience sexual pleasure. For example, “it was based around my wanting to get off” (Interviewee 2), and “I don't need to be massaged. I don't need gently. I don't want to be romanticised. I am paying for sex because I want sex” (Interviewee 9). Some women described their desires for sex as selfish, such as, “with the sex worker, maybe it sounds slightly weird to say this, but you can be a bit more selfish” (Interviewee 7), “you don't really have to put any effort in” (Interviewee 1), “this is all about me” (Interviewee 11), “you just want to be totally indulged, that is what you get” (Interviewee 8) and, “you can be completely selfish” (Interviewee 16). The women quoted here may be reflecting social attitudes about therapy as self-care and fun as selfish. Additionally, one-directional sex may feel selfish when considering social attitudes about sex as a shared activity.

Safety.

Most women interviewed referred to their physical and emotional safety as issues. Some felt that “safety” is part of what you pay for, and Interviewee 10 said the word “safe” nine times in her one hour interview. Some interviewees explicitly said buying sex was safer than picking up, for example, “I can make the choice to go out to a bar and pick someone up, which is certainly less safe” (Interviewee 15). Three interviewees also used a friend to call for security backup upon arrival and departure from the sex worker premises. Other interviewees

were more specific about what constitutes as safe by saying that a sex worker would not pressure you into doing anything, will not stalk you afterwards and will respect boundaries and consent. To illustrate, “and it's like a security thing, like, I never feel kind of pressured into doing anything that I don't want to” (Interviewee 1), and “it didn't occur to me in that circumstance that I wouldn't have been safe. Clearly, he had been around too long...No no no. Oh Christ, yeah, I've got so many friends who ended up being stalked...Any guy you meet in the bar can turn out to be a nutter” (Interviewee 11). Interviewee 13 compared the behaviour of male sex workers she had engaged as more caring and supportive than previous abusive intimate partners. Interviewee 1 mentioned that specialist BDSM practises require training for safety purposes, and that a sex worker felt more experienced in this regard. Interestingly, Interviewee 12 said, “seeing a sex worker who is accredited, who is tested, who is professional gives me the reassurance that I am safe”. This point demonstrates feelings described by Interviewee 12 but needs clarification because there are no accrediting bodies for sex workers, which is not the same as registration required in some States. Mandatory testing for STI's does occur in Victoria, but does not ensure that a sex worker does not have an STI. Interviewee 12 may have a sense of safety in these matters based on a sex worker's professional standing.

Emotional safety was also touted by women who bought sex as an important factor in their decision to buy it. Interviewees said they enjoyed being able to decide when, where, how and with whom to have sex. Women said they felt safe from rejection as a “sex worker won't belittle you, or be hurt, if you are unattractive or bad at sex” (Interviewee 12). One Interviewee said she had the freedom to explore her sexuality without jeopardising current relationships. For example, “... and in the future for me to have other kinds of relationships with women, this would be sort of a safer way of doing it. Um, without compromising our relationship and our family” (Interviewee 20). And, Interviewee 4 said that paying a sex

worker ensured emotional safety to be treated as her preferred gender, and to be respected. In a similar way, Interviewee 7 valued being authentic and not having to try hard to be sexy or desirable. The women interviewed said they assessed sex workers by the way they communicated the concept of safety in their online presence, through their reputations, and by demonstrating good oral communication. The women interviewed were not impressed by sex workers who advertised as “sex Gods”. For example, “but I think that men just promote themselves in a fashion that is completely over the top... They are all very good looking and they are all Valentino, and they are all studs in bed, and all the rest of it. And the reality is very far removed from that” (Interviewee 8).

Intimacy.

Most interviewees expressed a desire for intimacy when buying sex. For some, the word intimacy may have been used as a euphemism for sex, possibly to disguise their desire for sex as a physical act. Others, explicitly separated intimacy and sex, and expressed a desire for intimacy alone, describing intimate acts such as hair stroking and affirmations. Seven interviewees valued authenticity of the sex worker as important for real intimacy. They said they did not want fake, forced or awkward communication. For example, Interviewee 8 was scathing of insincere flattery and wanted only genuine exchange and Interviewee 21 said it was difficult to find a worker who is “100% into it”.

Learn.

A desire to learn more about sex was mentioned as motivation to see a sex worker by several interviewees. They wanted to learn about their sexual functions (Interviewees 10, 3, 5, 17,) orientations (Interviewees 20, 21, 15) and to learn particular sexual acts (Interviewees 3, 7, 17). As a consequence of buying sex, some interviewees were pleased to learn more about sex industry politics. Three interviewees (10, 11, 12) complained about their lack of sex education from parents and school and considered learning about sex to be an investment.

Some interviewees spoke about paying for sex as a rebellion against perceived restrictions and shaming of female sexuality. Some therapeutically motivated interviewees said they wanted to be able to have sex and Interviewee 15 said she wanted to learn to be a good lover.

Barriers to buying sex.

During the interviews women spoke about, or were asked, if they felt there were any barriers to buying sex. The women who had knowledge of the sex industry noted a gendered difference in services available such as no quickie services or brothels for women. They did not however, say they would buy these services if available. Women who bought heterosexual services complained that there were not enough straight male sex workers to choose from. Common themes that emerged from data analysis included feeling nervous and scared about buying sex, the price, experiences of stigma, and navigating laws.

Nerves.

As expected, being nervous or fearful about buying sex was a common theme throughout the interviews. However, women who had contact with the sex industry prior to buying sex said they did not suffer nervous feelings and the key was knowing what to expect (Interviewee 5) and having a gradual introduction to the idea (Interviewees 3 and 4). The most affected, were women who bought heterosexual services. Some examples include, “I nearly called the whole thing off” (Interviewee 11), “I was so scared I didn’t even want to ring the doorbell. Literally scared out of my mind” (Interviewee 12), “I was freaking out” (Interviewees 6 and 13), “for me it was huge, I was beside myself. I have never had so much adrenaline and nerves in my life” (Interviewee 14), “I was incredibly nervous beforehand” (Interviewee 7), “I don’t think I have ever been so nervous about anything” (Interviewee 17), “I was fucking scared” (Interviewee 19), “I don’t think I have ever been so nervous in my whole life. I wanted to run away” (Interviewee 20), “I was very nervous” (Interviewee 15), and “the first time you are going through this huge turmoil” (Interviewee 16). As

demonstrated, women graphically described the fear they felt before buying sex but were mostly unspecific about the exact source of fear. The most likely reasons, considering most fear was felt by heterosexual women, are fear of male violence and the effect of being socialised to be fearful. Their fear may be rational. Most of the heterosexual women interviewed who framed their sexual services as therapeutic, also voiced a history of male violence and/or anxiety issues.

Cost.

The cost of buying sex was mentioned by most interviewees. Some specifically noted a gendered difference between the cost for male or female clients. For example, “I have a perception that fewer women just go and pay for a half hour session like men for just a blow job or whatever” (Interviewee 19), and “for good experiences women buying sex need a nice hotel and an expensive escort. But men can go to brothels” (Interviewee 7). Alternatively, Interviewee 1 said, “the first girl was really expensive. Then, the dungeon [BDSM service] was a lot cheaper. When you are a woman you don't care if you can't stick your penis into their vagina because you don't have one, so it's like, I was getting the same service and it cost less. Sex is the thing that is expensive”. However sex is defined, various sexual services and providers charge extremely different rates, some being gender dependant.

Women described buying sex less often due to the expense. Interviewee said, “So, I can't afford it all the time. Because it is expensive” (Interviewee 10), “my husband might have an issue with the money!” (Interviewee 11), “only once. The only reason for that is money, unfortunately” (Interviewee 4), “I have to get a carer for [partner with dementia] so it is an expensive business. It [commercial sex] is frighteningly expensive. If it is an agency they certainly take their cut. I hope that the escort still gets the lions share, as it were, but God it is expensive. It is shockingly expensive” (Interviewee 16), “Price is a massive barrier for a lot of people” (Interview 17), “we have to keep saving up because it is expensive” (Interview

20), and “I’ve been reluctant to try again due to financial stress” (Interviewee 21). However, money was not an issue for all women. Interviewee 8 said, “I’ve had experiences with really high end sort of female providers, in the sort of \$800/hr plus category”. And, Interviewee 9 chooses “lower end” escorts because they come to her place, saying, “I am an independent woman. I make money. I am allowed to spend it however I want to”. While the cost of paying for sex may be a barrier for some women, Interviewee 8 made an important point in saying that many women “believe in their entitlement to free sex”, effectively preventing their purchase of it.

Women interviewed who framed their sexual services as primarily therapeutic were more likely to rationalise the expense as an investment. For example, “he is not the cheapest obviously, but I looked at it as an investment that I have to do to address this situation once and all” (Interviewee 12) and, “if I spread the money out that I spent on that over the year, it is a very good investment. It is investment in myself” (Interviewee 19). Further, “I was willing to pay...my psychiatrist said to me that I had probably saved quite a bit on therapy fees” (Interviewee 15) and, “It wasn’t just that I loved sex and I wanted to have sex with him. He actually offered me a reduced rate for that, which enabled me to be able to afford to go a bit more regularly” (Interviewee 17). Therapeutic frameworks when buying sex appear to fare better than entertainment in cost/benefit analysis, which may have some relationship to the concept of stigma. The relationship was specifically noted by Interviewee 5 who said that “it is stigma that prevents women buying sex and missing the therapeutic benefits”.

Stigma.

Interviewees were asked if they experienced any feelings of stigmatisation when buying sex. This question caused some confusion. For example, Interviewee 10 only talked about sex worker stigma, not understanding that she was asked about her own and Interviewee 14 conflated stigma with shame, saying, “I have no shame”. Yet, the implications

of stigmatisation were clear, for example Interviewee 17 said, “the risk of being publically shamed is like, really scary”. To further explore stigma, interviewees were asked if they would recommend buying sex to a friend and how many people they told about it. The interviewees would mostly recommend it to a friend meaning that they felt they had made the right decision. Alternatively, most interviewees told very few people, meaning that they were aware it was a stigmatised activity.

All interviewees said they would recommend a friend buy sex in most situations. For example, “it would depend on the circumstances. But I would not, not recommend it” (Interviewee 6), “if I think someone was not coping then yes” (Interviewee 10) and, “if I had that sort of relationship with a friend” (Interviewee 11). Interviewee 1, “highly recommends it”, and went on to say, “some [people] get offended and it is like...yeah, go home and make your own coffee then and don’t buy one in a shop either”. Twelve women who had bought sex said they would unconditionally recommend it to friends. Interviewee 18 said, “if I met [a good sex worker] I would give his business cards to all my friends”. Although Interviewee 9 and 10 denied feeling stigmatised, Interviewee 9 told “everyone except for like, my parents and relatives, yeah. Like, about 10 people, I have told”, and Interviewee 10 said that she kept her buying sex a secret from most of her friends. Other methods of managing stigma were Interviewee 2 who only associates with sex industry allies, and Interviewee 16 who told all manner of strangers and health professionals but not a single friend or family member. Exceptions were Interviewee 13 and 15 who told most people including extended family and work colleagues.

To explore the relationship with stigma with women who framed their sexual service experiences as therapy, their responses to questions about stigma were compared with women who framed their sexual services as entertainment and fun. Interviewee 5, who had bought sexual services through both frameworks, said, “I’ve talked more about the therapy than I

have about the male escort”. Surprisingly, further comparisons were unremarkable.

Regardless of the reason for buying sex, most women who did so were reluctant to tell other people, and expressed feeling stigmatised.

Experiences of stigma may be gendered. Interviewees were then asked if they thought men or women suffered more stigmas when buying sex. The answers revealed that women who bought sex were aware of, and affected by, stigmatising notions of slut and sexuality shaming.

The most obvious gendered differences in the experience of stigma when buying sex regarded slut shaming. Some interviewees felt that, “female pleasure is not regarded as important” (Interviewee 5), ideas of female sexual passivity are “unauthentic and dirty” (Interviewee 20), female sexuality “makes people deeply uncomfortable” (Interviewee 17), and the “stigma is about women having sexual desire full stop” (Interviewee 19). Complaints regarding gender-based double standards included expressing beliefs such as, there is more stigma for women with sexual dysfunction than men with sexual dysfunction (Interviewee 12), men buy sex for entertainment and it is expected of them (Interviewee 7) and, men are perceived to have high sexual desire yet women desire love (Interviewee 9). Interestingly, Interviewees 7, 8, 9 and 12, all said they thought women are expected to get free sex and not pay for it, the stigma being as much about sex as it is about the exchange of money.

Several women interviewed expressed feeling the effects of being stigmatised in their particular situation as much as buying sex. For example, Interviewee 2 felt stigmatised for identifying as gay and, Interviewee 3 felt her interest in BDSM was stigmatising, although she said dominant females are more accepted than submissive. Interviewee 4 said she experienced excessive stigma around being a person who is transgender that buying sex seemed insignificant and, Interviewee 6 said there was stigma in couples buying sex only when it was for a man’s benefit. Interviewee 3 would like to work as a sex worker if not for

the stigma and said, “stigma steels power”. Experiences of stigma appear to be unique to individual situations, yet almost universal in women buying sex.

Laws.

Some women interviewed considered Australian law and regulation of the sex industry influenced their experiences when buying sex. At the time of conducting the interviews, there was a surge of media about a NSW Parliamentary Inquiry considering the introduction of the Swedish model to criminalise clients, largely relying on narratives framing female sex workers as exploited (NSW Parliament, 2015). Some women made decisions about buying sex based on their perception of the laws, Interviewee 10 said that decriminalisation of the sex industry endorsed her decision to buy sex, and Interviewee 12 said, “which is um, a legal activity to do. And I was very lucky that it was legal and it is still legal”. Interviewee 10 also said she was scared of being criminalised, she did not “feel like a criminal”, and felt she was being accused of raping a male sex worker. The women interviewed demonstrated they were knowledgeable about Australian laws that govern the sex industry.

Explicit in exploitation narratives about the sex industry, as noted in previous chapters, is the victimisation of female sex workers and demonization of clients, labelling them as perpetrators of violence. Interviewee 8 said these narratives “make sex buyers into uncaring people” and Interviewee 11 “found the current positioning of sex work as assault to be deeply offensive to everyone engaged in it and particularly to women cast as victims”. Interviewee 11 said she, “suspects women buying sex suffer less stigma than men” due to exploitative narratives. Interviewee 15 said she tried to advocate for women buying sex on Twitter and was publically shamed and accused of being exploited by a male sex worker. She found the conflation of childhood sexual assault and sex work to be “deeply disturbing and disrespectful”. Interviewee 17 complained that clients of sex workers are talked about with

“no authority”, and neglected during public inquiries. She said, she “feels like a really strong feminist but there are other women out there who are going to shame me around this. They are pushing my story underground”. The women who bought sex and were interviewed for this study were adversely affected by exploitation narratives, and their experiences caused them to question the truthfulness of negative sex industry narratives.

Interviewees in Victoria said they were aware of the debate in NSW and also concerned about Victorian advertising and location laws about sex work. Interviewee 3 said she was critical of the laws that “make it particularly prohibitive for people to have these services and to find these services more openly, in locations that are safe”. Interviewee 16 complained that “escort agencies can’t actually describe what the services are”. And, Interviewee 5 said it was “silly and illogical that you can’t technically do things in your home” and several women complained about having to pay for a hotel room as well as escort services. The women interviewed questioned the validity of these laws.

The women interviewed for this project had awareness of, and were able to describe the process they went through, to weight up the risks and benefits of buying sex. Their motivations outweighed the barriers they identified. Most interviewees volunteered descriptions of their feelings about buying sex in hindsight, and others were prompted to speak about how they felt after the events.

Reflections About Buying Sex

All women interviewed in this study wanted to convey the outcomes of buying sex which they overwhelmingly felt were beneficial. There were seven women who described situations where sexual services did not meet their expectations, although all but one who was “doing it for her partner” (Interviewee 6), had experienced positive services at other times. Some female clients felt discriminated or rejected by some sex workers who were “not into girls” (Interviewee 2), or sex workers who failed to show, were late or, disorganised.

One woman felt that a male sex worker had been patronising toward her and some male sex workers wanted ongoing relationships with female clients outside of business transactions. It must be noted that the services bought by this cohort were well researched, meaning that sex workers who were likely to deliver bad services, such as men posing as sex workers or those without experience, were not engaged. All women in the study said they were open to buying sex in the future but two did not believe they would be able to find suitable workers.

The women interviewed were asked a few specific questions regarding alcohol and drug use, safer sex practises, and their relationships with sex workers when buying sex, as these areas had been flagged in scholarly research about female sex tourism. However, all the interviewees promptly answered these questions, and went on to describe feelings about their pleasure, sexuality and power.

Alcohol and drugs.

All interviewees denied excessive alcohol and drug use during commercial sex. Ten interviewees said they had one or two social drinks, and two said that they had used drugs during bookings in the past but not in recent years.

Safer sex.

All interviewees said they had used condoms during any penis-in-vagina-or-anus sex, although not all used dams. Three interviewees mentioned that negotiating safer sex practises in casual sex, swinging or picking up at the pub was much more difficult.

Emotional attachment.

All interviewees felt the possibility of emotional attachment to a sex worker was a particular risk yet, all described the ways they managed their own boundaries. The methods they used included limiting their visits to sex workers, changing providers, engaging in other non-commercial relationships and positive self-talk. Two interviewees were very clear about desiring pleasure without emotional intimacy and interestingly, both of them have

experienced a male sex worker who said he wanted a personal relationship with them. One interviewee has been in several long term relationships with male sex workers she met when she was their client. One other interviewee said that she was in a friendship with “her” sex worker, admitting that she would not go as often without the “friendship” and would find it hard if she could not continue the relationship. This interviewee and two others said that they were receiving assistance from professional mental health providers with boundary management when participating in commercial sex. Emotional attachment to sex workers does appear to be a risk for women buying sex.

Pleasure.

Sexual pleasure is not well addressed in academic work regarding the sex industry, however, most of the women interviewed were excited about being able to express the sexual pleasure they experienced when buying sex. Interviewees said, “I didn't think I would have that much of a good time that I did. It is just, kinda really fun” (Interviewee 1), “I’ve had some fantastic experiences” (Interviewee 2), “...really good fun...” (Interviewee 4), “Our sexual pleasure was going to be the most important thing” (Interviewee 5), “I got exactly what I wanted and numerous orgasms” (Interviewee 9), “It wasn't horrible. It was lovely. It was really nice” (Interviewee 10), “Joy, is what I think I got out of it. It makes me grin. Not just smile, but grin!” (Interviewee 11), “It was good. It was brilliant” (Interviewee 14), “I have been walking around with this big smile on my face” (Interviewee 16), and “It was spontaneous, it was fun and I enjoyed it” (Interviewee 18). These comments emphasise the importance of experiencing sexual pleasure for mental health and well-being, and that pleasure should not be overlooked in academic debate.

Sexuality.

Most of the interviewees expressed feeling different about their sexuality or that they had learned things through buying sex. For example, “I have invested a considerable amount

of money into my education into my own sexuality. I've become much more pansexual in my approach to intimacy. I have claimed my sexuality" (Interviewee 3) and, "I learnt through this particular male sex worker, so much about my own sexuality and my own body which I didn't even realise which he had taught me. And it opened my eyes up completely" (Interviewee 10). Interviewee 1 said she bought sexual services to learn about and experience specific acts, such as, "I am really into BDSM and so is my partner but the problem is, like, we are both submissive. If you see, like, lots of different people then you kind of experiment with each part of your sexuality".

Some Interviewees spoke of more universal impacts. For example, "I walked out much more grounded" (Interviewee 4), "[it was] transformative" (Interviewee 5) and, "the mental impact it has had on me is, that is like priceless. It is reaffirming my own sexual power" (Interviewee 9). In a similar way, women spoke about having more confidence and ways in which buying sex had assisted them in other areas of their lives. Interviewee 12 said, "this is a fantastic avenue for women who have these kinds of issues. I am in a relationship now". It was interesting that some Interviewees highlighted their femininity. For example, "[buying sex] managed to assist and restore my confidence as a woman" (Interviewee 13) and, "I kind of feel more alive and I notice now that other random men look at me. I didn't know if they were looking at me before but, I just didn't notice because I had switched that part of me off. But I sort of, I do, I feel alive now. I have learnt quite a lot about myself I think" (Interviewee 14). Interviewee 17 explored some of the reasons why buying sex afforded her confidence, "that freedom, and being able to explore different things and, not feeling judged or stupid. Or not, you know, this may sound awful, but really not needing to take care of him. Of really, understanding my body. From being someone that people might call a bit frigid, in a way, to being really sexually experimental now".

Interviewee's particular situations were also relevant regarding the importance they placed on learning about sex. For example, Interviewee 15 had experienced childhood sexual abuse and said, "I am stuck in the, the have had a lot of experience with sex but not having good experiencing. I am really enjoying the opportunity to do things to him because I want to". Additionally, Interviewee 20 was able to confirm her feelings regarding her sexual orientation. She reported, "I realised that I had always had feelings for women and I didn't really want to talk about it with my husband. And it surpassed my wildest expectations about how healing it was for me as a woman. And I can easily identify as being bisexual or queer. I feel more authentically myself". Each Interviewee had some experience of learning about sex, about themselves as women, as survivors, and in their sexual identifications.

Power.

The notion of power was raised during interviews particularly while speaking about increased confidence (6 interviewees) as a result of buying sex. Six further interviewees described their experience as empowering. Interviewee 7 said, "it felt like a real feminist moment". The notion of power in commercial sex is usually considered through gendered lens with power being afforded to male actors. Information from sex workers in the previous chapter introduced the idea of consumer power, raising questions about the degrees of power experienced by women buying sex.

Sex worker power.

Although sex working clients of sex workers suffered similar experiences and vulnerabilities as non-sex working clients when buying sex, the three interviewees who are current sex workers were able to reflect about the concept of power in the context of their work and compared with their experiences buying sex. Interviewee 1 said, "sex workers act like they have the power but they are really doing exactly what the client wants" and also

mentioned that the first time she bought sex from a man she tried to dominate him.

Interviewee 2 said,

I felt like I had control of asking. Like, what I wanted and for explaining myself clearly. But they are in control of the booking. Once I tell them what I want, it is their job to make it happen. And that is the whole point really because then I get to relax while they make it happen.

Additionally, Interviewee 21 said,

There definitely is a tangible power relationship in bookings. I can state what I want and they will do their best (or sometimes a mediocre) attempt to deliver it. I must admit that the power is a bit of a turn on.

This suggests consumer power is an important consideration when people buy and sell sex which has been previously overshadowed by notions of gendered power. The *acting*, or *feeling* one has power in some aspects of booking or enacting a service is clearly not universal. Client-pleasing is not an inherently powerless act. Client satisfaction is not fundamentally powerful. Feeling power is not limited to a tug-of-war in which more for me is less for you. Analysis of how other interviewees perceived power relationships is explored as heterosexual, submissive, and when in threesomes.

Heterosexual power relations.

Some interviewees specifically used the word “control” as an indication of power. For example, “I always had control of everything. [I] didn’t want to do something? No. Stop means stop” (Interviewee 10) and, “Women have learned that we are just 80% in control of something, in an arrangement like this we are 100% in control. Obviously you read the boundaries beforehand, but within those boundaries you are 100% in control” (Interviewee 12). These women’s narratives are clear regarding a feeling of being able to control sexual acts that are performed on them, they position the consumer as powerful, yet are vague about

the source of power. Interviewee 17 described, “The power is in learning to understand and communicate your own sexual needs. Women are not in positions to learn that from sex ed[ucation]. It is a confidence thing”. Power to buy sex is not enough. Exercising sexual power is to know, to communicate and to expect to receive one’s sexual desires. Sexual intelligence and confidence develops with experience. Interviewee 15, a survivor of childhood sexual abuse felt she had not yet learnt to verbalise her sexual needs but has progressed to being able to “move his hand to the right spot”. She also said, “The first time we had sex and I felt some pain and I said stop and he did. That was the first time I said stop and somebody did”.

An interesting paradigm was introduced by Interviewee 13 when she said, “so asking for what I want or what I need was very difficult with my husband and was very easy with the escort”. Sex in relationships may mirror broader relationship tensions and inequities that do not occur when sex is contracted, such as in commercial sex. Several interviewees compared, perhaps unfairly, relationship sex with commercial. Additionally, Interviewee 9 revealed how her commercial sex changed her thinking about casual sex, by saying,

I don’t believe I should be giving them oral sex when I am paying for it. It was sort of like a battle with my own mind. I actually think that they wouldn’t have been phased if I didn’t even put my hand on their penis at all. If I am going to pay for it, I am not going to make any moves. I want them to literally walk through the door and devour me.

Interviewee 9 describes feeling an urge to perform acts she does not necessarily desire to specifically please others. She went on to say that buying sex has assisted her to negotiate casual sex more effectively, breaking a habit of feeling worthless and used by men when she “gave into” their sexual demands.

Power in situations where a client wants to be submissive.

A difficulty arose when unpacking the concept of power while also considering the concept of being submissive. For Interviewee 11, being submissive was not having to do the work to identify and verbally communicate specific desires, for example, “That is a big part of what I personally find nice. That I don’t have to, for some extent, I don’t have to pay attention. I don’t have to lead. He just watches and reads and gets it right. I would actually say he knows what I like better than I do”. While submission in this way appears to be contradictory to the notion of power felt by interviewees above, there is still power in submission. Interviewee 4 explains, “I felt really in my power. You know what the paradox is, of course. Well, the bottom is the one who is in control. I never felt out of, never felt, that I was having to do something that I didn’t want. I felt like I could ask, yeah, it was really, totally positive in that regard”. Thus, the idea of power can indicate an overarching ability to control a situation with verbal and non-verbal means of communicating desires. Interviewee 7 communicated these approaches by saying, “Yeah, on the whole I felt like I was in control of the service. I still want men to desire me. Um, and so it is important that while I was in control of the session, he still knew how to, um, how to lead me to the bed, and how to kiss me and how to guide me in a way. Does that make sense?” Interviewee 7 doubts her explanation of power because she also said, “I still want men to desire me”. She could be weighing her sexual power to attract a man, and also grappling with ideas that submissive women who allow men “control” are socially more attractive than sexually demanding women. Alternatively, she could be feeling confused about feminist narratives of empowered women who do not submit or prepare themselves for a male gaze as mentioned in previous chapters. Either way, Interviewee 7 says she feels powerful and in control when she has bought sex.

Power in Threesomes.

A small insight into gendered power in sexual relations of more than two people was gained by comparing two accounts of women who had bought sex from male sex workers while with a male partner. Interviewee 6 said:

there was nothing unpleasant about it. I didn't hate it. It wasn't tortuous or abusive or unpleasant in any way. In fact really, yeah I'm not. [as if speaking to her boyfriend] I'm doing it for you and not for me. [speaking in the interview] But during that situation, I was, there wasn't a second where I didn't feel like I couldn't just say, just let's, you know? [speaking to a sex worker] Can you put your leg here? Can you, blah blah?

Interviewee 6 was very clear that she had control but did not sincerely enjoy herself because it was not her idea to buy sex. In contrast, Interviewee 18 said it was her idea to buy sex and her male friend was "just tagging along for the ride". This is not to say that enjoyment is always about who makes suggestions about sex, or that commercial threesomes are always made up of two men and one woman. These accounts do suggest that levels of enjoyment are also connected to feelings of control of situations long before, during and after the sexual encounter has occurred.

Each interviewee gave her time and knowledge to this project generously, especially considering the risks they felt of being stigmatised. Interviewees were not asked why they wanted to participate in the study, yet their reasons are important when using an interpretative phenomenological approach.

Why Be in the Study?

Interpretative phenomenological analysis guided an in depth analysis of each interviewee from a psychologically interpretative perspective. A memo for each case was written outlining the concepts that each person was most keen to impart. The memos,

together with notes about subtleties gleaned from all communication with interviewees such as their email manner and tone of voice were used to ask each case, “what is motivating this person to participate in the study? What do they want me to know? How would they like me to advocate for them?”

There was some overlap in motivations to be in the study. Nine interviewees were most motivated to be interviewed because they hoped their voices could contribute to stigma reduction for people connected to the sex industry and for female desire. Three of these interviewees and three others wanted to “give back” to the sex work community or to individual sex workers. Five other interviewees recognised the study as an opportunity to talk about experiences and try to understand themselves better. Four interviewees wanted to promote sex as therapy and perhaps separate therapeutic services from entertainment services. Other reasons for participation in the study included wanting men and women to have equal sexual opportunities (three interviewees), one interviewee would like to increase the market of women buying sex and attract more providers, one interviewee knew her extensive client history was valuable knowledge and, one interviewee was concerned that sex negative narratives could lead to her behaviour being criminalised. Most of the interviewees would not have participated had they not been assured anonymity. One created a generic email address for the occasion and another conducted the interview in her car, the only private place in her life. A great deal of gratitude is owed to these 21 women.

Summary

The recruitment methods were successful in attracting 21 diverse women who had bought sex. The cohort was Caucasian, more were under the age of 45 years than not, and more were highly educated with higher incomes, although low education or income did not exclude buying sex. Their motivations to participate in the study included a desire to advocate for sexual rights of women and for rights for people to buy and sell sex.

The women interviewed were equally divided about their motivations to buy sex for therapy or fun with safety, and to experience intimacy. Several interviewees framed their desires for non-reciprocal sex to be selfish. Four women who framed their use of sexual services to be only for therapy wished to disassociate from a perceived sex-for-fun industry. Less than half of the sample knew a sex worker or allowed someone else to do the research for them. All used Google and seven specifically mentioned a newspaper article published in the Sydney Morning Herald in 2013. Four were under psychological care and endorsement. Most interviewees bought sex multiple times. Twelve bought heterosexual vanilla services, six bought threesomes, seven were same-sex attracted, four bought BDSM services and two sought bodywork specialist services.

Seven interviewees described services that did not meet expectations in minor ways such as workers not showing up or appearing as they had previously described. No coercion or violence were experienced by the sample who all made choices based on thorough research. Fear of stigmas were the largest barriers to buying sex including slut shaming, exploitation narratives about the sex industry, and perceived shame about sexual orientations. Most interviewees told very few people, but would conditionally recommend it to a friend. Meaning they were happy with their choices yet aware that buying sex is stigmatised.

Lack of choices of workers and the cost of buying sex were also considered barriers. There were gender differences in the cost of buying sex. Conversely some women's perceived entitlement to free sex was a barrier to their buying it. Experiencing fear prior to buying sex was more prominent for women buying sex from male sex workers. Women buying sex were aware of various regulations and laws negatively affecting their choices when buying sex and some expressed a fear of being criminalised in future.

Areas of concern raised in female sex tourism research, such as alcohol and drug use and condom use, were not found to be a problem in this study. Rather, heterosexual women

complained that condom negotiation was more difficult with casual sex partners than with commercial partners. All the interviewees described feeling better about themselves and twelve said they felt more confident and empowered after having purchased sex. Emotional attachment was seen as a potential risk. The effect of buying sex on the sexuality of the interviewees was positive, encompassing learning and affirmation of their sexual identities.

The concept of power in commercial sex was explored and sex workers who also bought sex acknowledged that sex workers hold power to set boundaries but thereafter attempt to please clients effectively making clients feel powerful. Feelings of power during threesomes may have a relationship with who suggested the activity. Power for female interviewees in heterosexual bookings was experienced as a new phenomenon for some women who learned to identify and communicate their sexual desires and to expect their boundaries to be respected, and all the more so, when role-playing as submissive.

Chapter 9

What it Means when Women Buy Sex

The evidence of women buying sex presented in this thesis provides another dimension to scholarly debate about female sexuality and commercial sex. The evidence is supported through examination of the views of society, and experiential experts on both sides of commercial transactions. Discourses seen in contemporary Australian society include gendered constructions of desire and Madonna/whore dichotomies which contribute to gendered double standards, frequently constructing women as being unable or undesirous of buying sex. Analysis of responses in social media also offered an alternative view that sex work is work and consumers are consumers regardless of gender. Information from sex workers who spoke about their perceptions of female clients gave structure to visualise the market of female clients. Sex workers also compared their female to male clients in regards to their behaviour and gave insight into their awareness of power balances in commercial sex. The results of the analysis of in-depth interviews with women who have bought sex provided empirical first-hand evidence and describe their attitudes, motivations and situations, and details of their intimate experiences. Scholarly constructions of the sex industry need to be broadened to include all genders in all roles, lending to more compassionate understandings of sexual services. The results of the three sub-studies are drawn together in this chapter where the relationships between the sub-studies are discussed. The ontological concepts fundamental to the project, gender, sexuality and power, are the lens through which the conclusions are presented.

Gender: Double Standards

A key finding of the social analysis found a gendered double standard in the way women who buy sex are treated compared with men who buy sex. This is largely due to scepticism about female sexual desire and agency to buy sex. The double standard excuses

women from being considered exploitative when they buy sex and was found in both the scholarly literature about female sex tourists and in the results of social analysis. Further manifestations of a gendered double standard regard constructions of female sexuality as motivated to desire romance and emotional connection, meaning they would not desire commercial sex. Society's collusion with maintaining the status quo about female sexual passivity and desire for romance was seen in this project when more than 80% of AAMI's audience voted for the romantic relationship of Rhonda and Ketut, and after discussion about female sex tourism, only about 30% of Bowen's audience continued to dismiss the possibility of Rhonda as a possible sex buyer. Sex workers interviewed for this study described their female clients as having sexual desires unrestricted by romantic or true love scripts. Most of the women who bought sex who were interviewed said they did not desire romantic gestures and some spoke about paying for sex as a rebellion against perceived restrictions and shaming of female sexuality.

The way in which society views commercial sex is reflected in people's experiences of stigma when they participate in buying or selling sex. Exploitation narratives effect community attitudes toward a punitive direction of regulation of sex work which Minichiello, Scott, and Cox (2017) attribute to (male) sex work clients receiving the same or more stigma than sex workers. About half of the social comments analysed for this study expressed an opinion that sex work is inherently harmful and all clients are perpetrators. A similar number of comments demonstrated a discourse that sex work is work and some framed slut-shaming as shameful (for example, "do you have a problem with sex, per se?"). Paradoxically, this analysis also revealed that a small number of commentators simultaneously described male clients as perpetrators of violence and female clients as empowered. This gendered double standard reveals that although men and women buying sex are subject to stigmatisation, the source of discomfort for those commenting lies in mixed messages about female sexual

agency and conflation of sex work with male violence against women. When interviewed, women said they suffered slut shaming stigma when buying sex and felt genuine fear of being exposed as bad women. External stigma about sex for women may be contested, yet internal Madonna/whore narratives, learned through lifetimes of social conditioning, promote conflict regarding women's sexual desires and freedoms.

Acknowledgement of these gendered double standards assists our understanding about why women are less likely to identify as having bought a sexual service. Ironically, of the women who came forward to be interviewed for this project, titled "women buying sex", three objected to the idea that their activities should be considered to be the same as others who buy sex, two had "forgotten" previous somatic sexual services when reporting on more recent pleasure focused services and several considered themselves weird or unusual for identifying as sex buyers. A tendency toward denial that women buy sex *like men* or at all, is seen in scholarly studies and research design, media reports, and in the results of social analysis and some of the women interviewed in this thesis. These results may have significance in future survey designs which ask women about their sexual activities. Gendered double standards are underpinned by perceptions of differences in sexualities of men and women.

Sexuality: Which Women, Why and How.

Interviews with sex workers provided three take-away messages to describe the women who buy sex from them; diverse, non-heteronormative, and increasing in numbers. Sex workers said female clients had no particular characteristics regarding their age or educational, financial, or social status and situational factors were more relevant, such as sex or relationship difficulties. The women interviewed who had bought sex were indeed diverse, a greater number were under the age of 45 than older, and in general were more educated

with higher incomes. The small sample does not extrapolate to general population of women who buy sex but does challenge some stereotypes about them.

One of the most intriguing findings of this project is that some sex workers intuit that women in Australia may buy sex from female sex workers more often than from males. If so, commercial sex between women may be due to perceived sexual orientation fluidity (Vanwesenbeeck, 2009), a lack of straight male workers, or because many of the services that women buy do not relate to the genitals of the provider. Additionally, the rates of women buying sex from whom might be dependent on the particular idiosyncrasies of specific sexual services such as BDSM and therapeutic services. The findings of non-heteronormative activity based on analysis of data from experiential experts reveal heteronormative assumptions in contemporary notions about the sex industry are erroneous. Moreover, the findings of social analysis in this thesis noted, a complete absence of comments by audience members to suggest awareness that women might buy sex from other women or the existence of transgendered workers and clients. Underpinning social awareness, existing research about the sex industry finds research efforts are heavily weighted to support heteronormative assumptions. For example, Dennis (2008) and Davis and Miles (2013) report that 84% of research about the global sex industry is exclusively focused on female sex workers. Increasingly, male sex workers and male clients in general, are examined in response to abolitionist calls to criminalise clients of sex workers, and most often through a lens of deviance (Vanwesenbeeck, 2017).

While the prevalence of the well-established male market for sex remains stable (Richters et al., 2014; Rissel, Richters, Grulich, Visser, & Smith, 2005), sex workers in this study described the female market to be increasing. However without a baseline study on the prevalence of women buying sex and the qualitative nature of this study, the finding that the female market is increasing is speculative. More recent scholarly inquiry has estimated the

prevalence of female clients of sex workers to be increasing based on examination of sex worker websites commonly targeting women (Kumar, Minichiello, Scott & Harrington, 2017).

Some of the academic debate about women buying sex documented in this thesis argues that if women buy sex, their activities are not problematic (like men) because of the differences in behaviour of men and women. The women interviewed who had bought sex, and the sex workers who had female clients responded to questions about the types of services they bought, their motivations, behaviour and management of risks.

Analysis of the types of sexual services women bought, most often from private escorts or through agencies, does suggest a slight gender difference in the way men and women buy sex. A section of the low budget market available to men, brothels or *quickie* services, was not utilised by any of the women interviewed although several complained about their lack of choice in types and prices of services and a lack of providers. Sex workers interviewed said their female clients spent much more time than men, researching and connecting with service providers before deciding to buy sex. Although, Horswill and Weitzer (2018) found novice male buyers of sex may do extensive research prior to buying sex. Most of the women interviewed also said they spent time researching sex workers to assess their suitability, effectively making quickie services impracticable. In regards to safety, women who feared for their personal safety were mainly buying sex from men and they rationalised buying sex as safer than picking up. These slight gender differences do not detract from the circumstance that women who buy sex, do the research, contact sex workers, make appointments, and negotiate commercial sex transactions.

About half of the women interviewed in this study considered their primary motivation to buy sex were for fun and entertainment, with other important reasons to be for safety, to experience intimacy, and to learn. Scholarly research about men found that the most

common motivations to buy sex were to seek sexual variety, for convenience, and a desire for intimacy (Caldwell, 2012; Pitts, Smith, Grierson, O'Brien, & Misson, 2004; Sanders, 2007; Wilcox, Christmann, Rogerson, & Birch, 2008). The other half the sample of women interviewed framed their primary motivations to buy sex as therapeutic. Therapeutic sexual services may be marketed as body work, a combination of *hands on* with talk therapy (for example: <http://sexologicalbodyworkers.org/what-is/>) or sex surrogacy, which usually involves a counsellor or psychologist to instruct a trained surrogate to have graduated sex with a client. Sex surrogacy is not common in Australia, probably because sex work regulation and decriminalisation of clients allows legal access to general sex workers. Common conditions that are treated through therapeutic sexual services include trauma recovery, and physical issues such as vaginismus or inability to orgasm. Interviews with therapeutic sexual service providers suggest that women may take up these services more readily than men. Possible explanations for gender differences include; women may have more sexual trauma and suffer different physical issues than men (Vanwesenbeeck, 2009), sex is marketed to women as pleasurable self-help (Attwood, 2005), men have a tradition of seeing regular sex workers who, consciously or not, may satisfy a need for therapy (Sanders, 2007), and some women may wish to avoid slut shaming stigma's through constructions of their desires as therapeutic rather than sexual.

In regard to client behaviour, sex workers noted very small gendered differences. These were mainly in their use of language, adherence to sex industry etiquette, consent issues and concerns about personal safety. Sex workers said that women generally use less demanding language than men. This is not to say that all men understand how to access, negotiate and enjoy commercial sex, but to emphasize the structural reasons why men appear to be more comfortable with buying sex. Women interviewed and sex workers said of their female clients, that they spent extra time to negotiate services to ensure they have understood

the boundaries of individual sex workers. These small gendered differences do not correspond to assumptions, that men and women behave differently when buying sex, seen in the social analysis and scholarly literature.

Articles in mainstream media are more likely to portray women buying sex as being at risk in ways that men are not. In this study, seven interviewees described services which did not meet their expectations, however all said they would in the future, or had since, bought sex with more positive outcomes. Emotional attachment to sex workers was considered as a possible risk by some interviewees, but all denied any confusion in this regard. Concerns about sex workers as vectors of diseases, date back to times when sexually transmitted infections were poorly understood (Harcourt & Donovan, 2005) and women interviewed said they felt safer from STI transmission with professional sex workers than with casual partners. Recent research demonstrates condom use in Australian hetero-commercial sex to be close to 100% (Donovan, Harcourt, Egger, & Fairley, 2010) and this small study concurs, however use of dams between women was low. Although no interviewees in the study reported any violence in their individual engagement with sexual services, it is acknowledged that there is a possibility of predatory men posing as sex workers, which this cohort appears to have avoided, probably due to extensive research prior to buying sex. Possible risks of buying sex may be emphasised for women because women are perceived to be generally at risk in ways that men are usually not due to assumptions about male power over women.

Power: Consumer or Gender?

Academic debate about women buying sex, and the social analysis in this thesis, revealed that much of our intellectual understanding of commercial sex is based heavily on male entitlement. Debate about gender power in sex work, however, is not based on male or female power to buy sex, but power for female sex workers to determine the service they offer to male clients. Every sex worker interviewed for this project described their feelings of

power over clients in selling sex. Some acknowledged that consumer power means sex workers generally do try to grant client desires, but none felt they did this at the expense of their values. The sex workers interviewed said that female clients asked more questions about boundaries in order to respect them, and that they understood the non-universal nature of consent. They said their female clients were more likely than men to *check in* with the feelings of the sex worker throughout bookings. Sex workers also emphasised these gender differences as minor, and they felt client and provider roles remained paramount regardless of gender. The notion of women buying sex has potential to disrupt arguments about sex worker autonomy which rely on tropes of male entitlement.

Media articles and scholarly journal articles, such as Jeffries (2003), about the risks for women buying sex raise questions about female sexual agency when buying sex. A number of comments in the social analysis found women buying sex were sometimes considered victims of male sex workers. Women buying sex who were interviewed said their consumer power gave them permission to state their needs affording them feelings of power they may not have experienced in non-commercial relationships. All the women interviewed described feeling empowered and/or in control when buying sex. They said they learnt to negotiate consent, often considered a female power, and to ask for exactly what they want on their own terms and with a sexpert, thus assisting them in non-commercial situations. In terms of comparing consumer power between men and women who buy sex, some interviewees said they may have less power than men in terms of having generally lower incomes, less knowledge of commercial sex scripts, and because they are acting outside of expected gender roles.

Women who bought sex felt additional concerns about payment for sex, which may not effect men buying sex, including heteronormative notions of women owning sex that men have to earn. de Beauvoir (1997) explains, “from primitive times to our own, intercourse has

always been considered a ‘service’ for which the male thanks the woman by giving her presents or assuring her maintenance...a woman gives herself, man pays her and takes her” (p. 395-6). When women pay for sex they interrupt ideas that they own sex and that they must give it. Women buying sex spoke about their choices of not *picking up* in a bar or club, and some said they felt pressure from society to have free sex and not pay for it. Further, some women said other women believed in their *entitlement* to free sex, preventing them from considering paying a sex worker.

Stigma about paying for sex has been a consistent theme through each analysis as, grounded in different ways for different genders, affecting sexuality, and “stealing” power. Analysis of social discourse which conflates sex work with slavery and/or slut shaming women who buy sex, frame women buying sex as perpetrators or morally corrupt. Sex workers also said stigma for female clients was grounded in slut shaming. Lastly, women who were interviewed who buy sex said they fear stigma and the threat of being criminalised, but generally feel empowered through their experiences buying sex.

Strengths and Limitations of this Project

This section evaluates the project for strengths and weaknesses. The scope of the project as a small qualitative study is not appropriate to estimate the prevalence of women who buy sex, or to claim those interviewed represent all sex workers or women who have bought sex (Creswell, 2007). This project is an introduction into women who buy sex as they have not previously been examined in any depth. All interviewees gave their time and trust generously and the success of this project is also theirs.

Social Analysis.

McKee’s textual analysis (2003) and the emphasis McKee places on finding a range of audience meanings without hierarchical value was ideal for examination of some contemporary discourse about commercial sex and female sexual agency. The multiple

possible interpretations made by the general public in texts for this analysis provide a reflection of public sentiment and are not definitive. The people who contributed comments in response to Bowen's article were only those online at the time, understanding English language, and motivated to comment. The use of intertexts broadened the analysis and extant text (unsolicited data) eliminates participant bias and recovers publicly available knowledge. The broad range of discourses found in the social analysis confirmed the appropriate use of McKee's method, ensuring the data led the results.

Advertising for Participants.

The online approach to advertising for interviewee recruitment was successful in achieving a solid number of participants for qualitative analysis with relatively modest effort. Extensive efforts were made to connect with key organisations prior to advertising, such as Scarlet Alliance and Sex Worker Outreach Projects, providing sex workers opportunities to contribute to the specifics of the project, and forming relationships based on trust. The successful recruitment for participants is considered to be a result of key industry players sharing the recruitment advertising link via Twitter and Facebook. In the past, online recruitment has been criticized for being accessible only to those with home computers and internet access, although it is now recognised that the digital divide is diminishing (in Australia) and online recruitment represents a broader sample of society than previously (Gaiser & Schreiner, 2009).

Self-selecting Participants.

Participants interviewed were self-selecting and may have had strong feelings about selling and buying sex, in order to motivate them to volunteer. Although they could have had strong negative feelings, only participants with positive attitudes volunteered to be interviewed. Some of the experiences of these people did not meet their expectations, but overall, they all said they felt positively about selling or buying sex. A peculiarity of this

project is that only Caucasian women who had bought sex volunteered to be interviewed, and the reason for this remains unclear. Self-selecting participants do not represent all eligible participants, however ethical standards and participants willingness to share their experiences, are imperative to research diligence. The diversity of interviewees suggests self-selecting participants for this study were drawn from multiple locations and situations, although a single ethnicity.

Recruitment.

The success of recruitment must again acknowledge various sexual service providers who shared the study recruitment link. It is also important to note that several interviewees sought to influence the focus of the study, indeed the title of the study, to another more romantic or therapeutic meaning in efforts to dissociate from the term *buying sex*. The circumstances of these women responding to recruitment advertising about buying sex demonstrate the complexity of reaching this target group. The promise of anonymity and an open-ended interview may have influenced these women who were assured they would be able to express themselves on their own terms unlike tick boxes beneath fixed (and open to interpretation) survey questions. Implications for further research regard the particular wording of survey questions or recruitment advertising, or perhaps a cultural shift, where women who participate in sexual services have incentives and fewer barriers to voicing their opinions and experiences.

Interviews.

The method of interviewing providers and consumers, also used by Bernstein (2010b), is recommended. However, projects which intend to interview sex workers need to acknowledge that they are working for a living and need to be remunerated for their efforts to assist research (Phipps, 2017). Unfortunately, this insight (and financial freedom) escaped me until I had completed the project so I have made a donation to a sex worker led project in

Australia as a general way to express my gratitude to all sex workers. I urge future research projects to consider the financial needs of their participants and the value of their information. In the meantime, I acknowledge that sex workers have privileged knowledge about their clients which is valuable in terms of increasing our understanding (Agustin, 2007; Sanders, 2008) and this project demonstrated that sex worker knowledge about their female clients integrated well with the experiences of the interviewed women who bought sex.

Analysis.

Despite all efforts for qualitative research to be objective, the subjectivity of the researcher is both a strength and a possible weakness (Breurer, Mruck, & Roth, 2002; Ratner, 2002). Phenomenological interpretation depends on the researcher prior knowledge of the phenomenon which may enrich the objective understanding of participant world views (Smith, 2011). At the same time researcher bias, particularly in sex industry investigations, has been noted as a challenge by Weitzer (2000). For this project, prior knowledge of the sex industry was gained through a Masters study regarding male clients of sex workers (Caldwell, 2012) and through contact with sex worker outreach projects, counselling clients and online communities who have bought and sold sex. The experiences of sex workers and their clients have not been exclusively positive although they were overwhelming so, hence positive findings for the project. It must also be noted, that no contact has ever been made directly or indirectly with a person believed to be trafficked or participating in forced sex. Moreover, the technique of hearing uninterrupted stories of women who bought sex avoided any possibility of asking leading questions, and transparency in research findings is demonstrated through the use of verbatim quotes from participants.

The theoretical framework, queer theory, was effective in allowing a critical reading of gender controlling sexuality to challenge fixed notions of gendered behaviour. Personal

bias toward either exploitation or empowerment views of the sex industry were avoided by the use of a polymorphous paradigm which considers sex work to be diverse.

Significance of the Research

Although several scholars have called for research about women buying sex, the research gap has been unnoticed or actively ignored by those who consider the implications of women buying sex to be negligible. For example, Sheila Jeffreys of CATWA and University of Melbourne (at the time) was asked to participate in this study and replied by email on 3 December 2014 to say she knew nothing of women buying sex (despite her journal article prominent in this thesis (Jeffreys, 2003)), and she asserted the “problem is men buying women and men”. The promotion of narratives that characterise the sex industry as inherently exploitative are associated with conservative and religious narratives about sex as being shameful for women and carry enormous political weight influencing regulatory models which negatively impact the lives of sex workers and their clients, in several countries (Phipps, 2017). The sex industry undoubtedly includes an element of exploitation of workers and lest often, their clients, however it is dishonest, unhelpful, and harmful to view the entire industry through exploitative lens. Theoretically, in jurisdictions which have criminalised buying sex in response to exploitation narratives, women could be charged and incarcerated for buying sex.

This thesis has shown that any research about clients of sex workers who are not men could be crucial to current debates in sex work about gender and power in academic, political and social spheres. More research is necessary. For example, pilot studies and experimental surveys could investigate strategies of asking women about sexual services in ways which assist participants to critically analyse and be open about their activities. Further, the differences between how men and women buy sex could be examined more thoroughly through consideration of concepts of femininity, promiscuity, therapeutic sexual services,

negative sex industry propaganda, or women having lower economic status. Lastly, future sex tourism research using a *reverse gaze*, by investigating Asian sex tourism in Western countries, has the potential to disrupt arguments that define sex tourism in only developing nations as exploitative.

Consensual adult sex is pleasurable and therapeutic whether commercial or non-commercial. Sex workers who assert the benefits of their services are often discounted as unrepresentative. Sex industry clients who are men and who might wish to promote the benefits of receiving a sexual service are not in a position to assert sex industry positive claims when all men who buy sex are conflated with violence against women. Women buying sex challenge those constructions of the sex industry as unethical or as a scourge to society only because they escape the stigma that male clients suffer. However, slut shaming stigma's appears to prevent women from publically owning sexual purchases. Women's voices are vital to challenge gendered narrative about their sexuality and to bring understanding to the diversity of the sex industry. This project gave some women who have bought sex a voice.

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Appendix A

Literature Review Procedure

The literature search began in 2013 by using electronic search facilities at UNSW library in the databases; Psych INFO, PubMed, Sociological Abstracts and ProQuest Sciences. Using search terms of female OR women, sex, AND buying OR commercial resulted in large numbers of papers on unrelated topics and small numbers of papers regarding men who buy sex or women selling sex. Initial key words were (women or female) AND (buy sex, clients of sex, consumers of sex, sex tourism, romance tourism, male sex worker*). The assistance of several librarians was sought at the beginning and end of the process to guide and to check for rigour. Publications of interest were those with any detail of female clients of sex workers, published post 2000, and included qualitative or quantitative empirical studies, conceptual discussion papers and literature reviews. Exclusion criteria included any paper which referred to female clients of sex workers anecdotally or without any interpretation or empirical data about them. In addition to data base searches, all relevant papers found were used for reverse citation and reference searches. Periodic searching, reverse citation tracing and liaison with academics working in the subject have added articles published in the meantime. A final search in March 2017 repeated the initial databases and search terms, from 2012 to the present, revealing no new sources, except one generated from this project. A table of search results is listed on the following page. The table illustrates some of the difficulties encountered, such as high numbers of studies where sex is used as a category rather than a verb, and when client is conflated with patient. In cases where large numbers of papers were listed, the first 200 were scanned for relevance, usually finding none.

Appendix B

Systematic Literature Review Table

Women who buy sex (14 – 20 Jan 2013)/ women who buy sex (2013 – May 2017)

ALL searches used keywords (women OR female*) NOT (men OR male*) AND (keywords in table below)

Additional Key Words	Psych INFO	No of relevant articles	PubMed	No of relevant articles	Sociological Abstracts	No of relevant articles	Pro-Quest Sciences	Social 51 Dbases	All databases 2013-17
“buy sex”	0		8	0	9	0	2	0	52/0
“buy sex” NOT “sex work”	0		0		9	0	2	0	0
“buy sex” or “clients of sex*”	27	0	7397	Client= patient	12	0	8	0	0
“sex tourism” OR “romance tourism”	13	1	4	0	78	3	17	6	35/1
“sex touris*”	13	1	0		34	3	21	6	48/0
“female clients of sex*”	3	0	6876	1	0		0		0
“male sex worker*”	0		4	0	20	6	9	0	0
“male sex worker” AND (client OR consumer)	0		0		8	0	0		0
(clients OR customers OR consumers) AND (sex or sexual*)	1083	3	13863 NOT patient 368	1 1	8012	2	1214	1	490/0
“sex industry” AND (clients or consumers)	12	1	33	1	12	0	54	2	0
“sex industry” AND (“female clients” OR “female consumers”)	0		0		0		1	1	0
“commercial sex”	164	2	354	0	95	0	37	0	198/0

Note: The first 200 articles were viewed when searches were over 200.

Appendix C

Descriptions of Rhonda Advertisements

1st advertisement – AAMI Safe Driver Rewards - *Applause*⁸

- Uploaded to YouTube Oct 3, 2011 by AAMI Insurance.
- 60,452 views by 5 May 2013.

The first advertisement in the series sets the scene of a relatable character – Rhonda. She is being rewarded for being a safe driver. Rhonda is saying goodbye to her colleagues as she leaves work when they spontaneously and enthusiastically begin to clap and cheer for her. She appears pleased but confused as everyone is cheering including the window washer and the car park attendant, for something unknown. As she drives her car out of the car park she is greeted as a celebrity by crowds of waving people, a new bronze statue of herself has been erected in the town square and there is complete furore. A journalist in a hovering chopper narrates “good drivers like Rhonda deserve recognition. AAMI safe driver awards now offer up to 15% discounts for drivers who don’t claim”. Rhonda is driving the only car on the road, and surrounded by cheers, she joins in.



2nd advertisement – AAMI Safe Driver Rewards – *Rhonda goes to Bali*⁹

⁸ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y0Kh8wyJHwA>

⁹ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmiB1t7KD48>

- Uploaded to Youtube by AAMI Insurance 8 Mar 2012.
- 148,271 views by 5 May 2013.

The second advertisement opens with Rhonda in a deckchair on a tropical beach having her feet massaged by a motherly native Balinese woman. Rhonda says, “AAMI’s safe driving rewards took me here. I can now indulge in a few more pleasures.”

The Balinese woman says, “I think I know you.”

Rhonda continues with, “but with 15% off my insurance I can afford to...”

She is interrupted by the woman with, “You’re Rhonda.” Rhonda tries to finish the massage, pulling away and saying thank you in Indonesian. The woman forces her back and says “oh no. you stay. You stay. Beautiful driver (pulling on foot). Beautiful brake foot (further massaging foot).”

A narrator reads “AAMI’s safe driver rewards...”

Meanwhile dozens of local women try to massage Rhonda’s safe brake foot but the original woman pushes them away saying “Rhonda is mine.” Rhonda behaves humbly, appearing embarrassed, as one unaccustomed to attention.



3rd advertisement – AAMI safe driver rewards. Rhonda goes to Bali – Part 2

#HotLikeASunrise¹⁰

- Uploaded to Youtube by AAMI Insurance 27th May 2012.

¹⁰ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HW_kKUWIslo

- 225,277 views by 4 January 2015.

This advertisement introduces Ketut, a young, attractive local bar tender and neglects to mention he's a hotel manager. The opening scene places Rhonda in a deck chair on a Balinese beach. "I've always dreamt of doing something more exotic. And with 15% off my insurance, AAMI's safe driving rewards helped me get there.:

Ketut is seen approaching with a cocktail, "I made special drink for you today Rhonda." he says.

"Oh, thank you," she gushes.

"You look so hot today, like a sunrise," he says as he erects the sun umbrella.

"You're naughty," she giggles, "thank you Ketut." Rhonda removes her sunglasses to reveal racoon style sunburn.

Ketut says, "remember (fingers pointing at his eyes), eyes on the road Rhonda."



4th advertisement – AAMI Safe Driver Rewards - *Rhonda returns from Bali*

#HotLikeASunrise¹¹

- Uploaded to Youtube by AAMI Insurance on 28 September 2012.
- 30,671 views by 4 January 2015.

Back in Australia, a friend driving asks, "so, did you get lucky?"

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“There was this one guy,” says Rhonda as magical music and hazy scene change indicates a dream sequence. In the dream, Rhonda lounges on a four-poster bed with canopy on the beach and Ketut approaches with a cocktail. “Our eyes met,” she remembers, “he offered me a special drink”.

““Oh, you look so hot today.” says Ketut as the dream scene changes to an idyllic pool where the couple stand waist deep.

“Like a sunrise,” Rhonda recalls to her friend who sighs in romantic envy. The scene changes back to the bed “I whispered back, kiss me Ketut,” says Rhonda. Just as their heads lean forward to kiss in the dream sequence, Rhonda’s head is thrown forward in the car scene as they are hit from behind by a truck carrying watermelons. Rhonda’s friend takes a picture of the accident to demonstrate the use of AAMI’s Claim Assist App with a narrator explaining that the App will assist parties of an accident to understand “exactly what happened.” “Something happened,” Rhonda’s friend comments to Rhonda about her relationship with Ketut. Rhonda smiles dreamily.



Rhonda goes to Bali – *Behind the Scenes* – AAMI Insurance¹²

- Uploaded to Youtube on 12 March 2012.
- 97,796 views by 4 January 2014.

¹² https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QjMnqa_tqmc

While there is some emphasis on what constitutes a good driver, this advertisement is promoting the series as an ongoing romantic comedy. Mock interviews with Rhonda and Ketut, other characters in the advertisements and several locals and tourists, continue to allude to romance between Rhonda and Ketut without revealing anything explicit. The advertisement opens with the words ‘AAMI presents Rhonda’s road to Bali’ over a beach scene and oriental music. Giving the video a title creates the impression of amateur filming, ‘behind the scenes’ of the real story, creating a sense of intimacy or special knowledge. Rhonda sits forward in a deck chair, more candid than the ‘official’ advertisements. Background white noise increases the ‘amateur’ feel as Rhonda humbly speaks about her motivations to come to Bali. Ketut approaches from behind her with a drink and introduces himself. He is polite without any sexual banter. By presenting a rather banal ‘first meeting’, the audience is led to imagine a developing romance between Rhonda and Ketut, rather than a possible scenario of ‘sexually aggressive beach boy preying on innocent foreign women’. Ketut, being interviewed, speaks of his career progression from beach life saver (masculine) to hotel manager (more lucrative). Incidentally, many ‘Kuta Cowboys’, local male sex workers in Bali who have sex with female tourists are beach life savers (Jennaway, 2008). The Beach Masseur from the 2nd advertisement is interviewed about her famous clients, including Rhonda which elevates Rhonda’s status. A tourist is interviewed who says, “I am such a big fan of Rhonda. I saw her on the plane on the way over here.”

Another says, “it’s wonderful, she actually lights up the place. I actually met her at the airport.” Rhonda’s fame is reinforced at the same time as her ordinariness as a regular person who speaks with strangers easily and catches planes. Consumerism is reinforced (as form of economic aid) when the Masseur describes Rhonda as generous and Rhonda speaks of having her hair and nails done, as many Australian tourists who visit Bali can relate to. Adding humour and Australian political relevance, a local says, “She look like a Prime Minister.”

Ketut says, “I think her eyes on the road but she is looking for love too.” The camera switches briefly to Rhonda in the deck chair glancing at Ketut while reading a book titled, ‘passion in paradise’. A fellow tourist says, “I think there might be a little something between Ketut and Rhonda.”

Ketut agrees, “I think so, because her eyes always on me too.” The reinforced romance confirms the audience’s assumptions. Interviews with all characters then reinforce good driving for the last 30 seconds of the 2.05 advertisement because the purpose is selling car insurance, after all.



Rhonda’s High School Reunion #HotLikeASunrise ‘Who’s right for Rhonda?’¹³

- Uploaded to YouTube by AAMI Insurance on 18 August 2013.
- 145,697 views on 2 February 2014.

Upon Rhonda’s return to Australia AAMI disassociates from sex tourism because *real* emotion is involved with Ketut and Rhonda’s relationship. At Rhonda’s high school reunion, some *bitchy* friends ask, “where is Ketut? Is he Kaput?” Rhonda appears disappointed and then shamed as her rivals laugh at her. However, Rhonda scores the attention of Trent Too-good, who considers himself boyfriend material and they dance the night away. Trent was apparently unattainable in the past because Rhonda has “always had a thing” for him. It is her new status, gained by her choice of car insurer, her safe brake foot and being sexually desired by an exotic other, that’s catalysed this new relationship opportunity that was previously

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VnJYxgTvNPI&list=PLPFOUSApM DPgfC3RcTJ GhBd-YUrSso4BZ>

denied. Rhonda manages to maintain her status with Trent even as he paternally cleans lipstick from her face, reminding us that Rhonda is still relatable as an average person. As cleaners work to clear the aftermath of the party, Ketut arrives with flowers which he drops in disappointment, realising that he has missed his opportunity with Rhonda. Ketut's arrival is unrealistic because Balinese hotel managers are not likely to be able to afford flights to Australia. A more realistic possibility is that he had been financially sponsored by Rhonda, which would further explain her disappointment when she thought he did not attend the reunion. It is also of significance that a school reunion sets the scene for this advertisement because school reunions are often a showcase to boast of achievements. In addition, school reunions can be a source of anxiety for people who fear judgement from others who've had the same educational opportunities and are of the same age. It is not too far-fetched to consider that someone might pay for a hansom companion if they felt shame for their single status.



Rhonda's High School Reunion – *The Inside Story* #HotLikeASunrise¹⁴

- Uploaded to YouTube by AAMI Insurance 28 Oct 2013.
- 3,918 views by 2 February 2014.

Background information is provided with interviews of characters from the school reunion to create a competition between #TeamTrent and #TeamKetut. The bitchy friends

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hyeUUQayMQE&list=PLPFOUSApMDPgC3RcTJGhBd-YUrSso4BZ>

(Carly and Danny) are gossiping in the bathroom, using genY slang and exaggerated movements. They reinforce that Trent Toogood is *too good* for Rhonda using childlike, school yard logic. Rhonda's friend Kate, explains that she herself is infatuated with Trent and like Rhonda, was not considered as worthy of Trent's attention in the past. Trent speaks of his new interest in Rhonda who has "just blossomed". Carly and Danny snidely question the basis of the relationship between Rhonda and Ketut by asking, "what is she doing with Trent anyway if she has this (eye roll) Balinese boyfriend? Or whatever."

"Ketut is from another world, he is exotic, he makes amazing cocktails and he loves her. He is tropical fruit. It's tropical dreams." Kate explains that Rhonda and Ketut had difficulty maintaining a long distance relationship.

Carly says, "Rhonda and Ketut. Trouble in paradise." Although Kate personifies the romantic side of the debate about Rhonda and Ketut's relationship, her innocent reference to tropical fruit offers Ketut as an exotic commodity. The final credit is a URL for a AAMI sponsored website about 'whosrightforrhonda'.¹⁵ The general public has opportunities to contribute to the debate. This is when the audience can engage metaphorically to who is right for Rhonda: #TeamKetut for romantic fantasy, or #TeamTrent for as realism.

On 10 Oct 2013, AAMI uploaded: Trent Too-good confirming his newfound love for Rhonda.¹⁶

AAMI wrapped up the series on 9 January 2014 with: *New Rhonda and Ketut! AAMI Drive Happily Ever After*.¹⁷ In this brief advertisement Rhonda returns to her school reunion to find Ketut waiting with her anklet. With Cinderella undertones he places her anklet on her ankle from his bended knee. He makes an Indonesian love declaration and Rhonda clumsily

¹⁵ <http://whosrightforrhonda.com.au/>

¹⁶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MSRpJLhw_p8&list=PLPFOUSApMDPgFC3RcTJGhBd-YUrSso4BZ

¹⁷ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pqbtR7gyYeI>

replies, highlighting their cultural difference. We briefly see Kate and Trent Too-good happily hooking up.



Appendix D

Comments Table for Social Analysis

comment no	date/time	R+K	Double standard?	themes	text
1	23 Jan 2013 10:14:38am	love			Please! Can Rhonda and Khuta go backpacking to LA next?
2	23 Jan 2013 9:15:00am	fantasy			All this time I thought the ad was about having adequate insurance in case you're struck from behind be a truck with an unsecured load, whilst you daydream at the intersection about a fantastical holiday...in the words of Mellencamp...he tells me a story about some girl in Kentucky, but there ain't no girls like that...and I wish Jimmy Necktie would get back to work, my Porsche doesn't fuel itself you know...
3	23 Jan 2013 6:47:58am	ST		buy sex is bad	I find it all very sad really, not the being treated like a queen or king for a week but the failure of the feminist movement to become anything but a reflection of all the things they complained about in men. A young blonde girl driving a small BMW tight up your backside on a very busy road as she weaves in and out of the traffic causing other drivers to brake was always the domain of stupid young men and now we have stupid young women doing the same. The post feminist female is as bad mouthed and badly behaved as the young male in my day. I stupidly thought that the feminist movement would bring both sexes closer together but it seems it has just driven them apart in a different way. The lack of respect is shocking to me.
4	23 Jan 2013 12:51:32am	Fling		racism	What a bunch of racist drivel in these comments. If Rhonda had been to London and hooked up with a white Englishman there'd be no problem accepting this as a holiday fling. Mixed races not acceptable for you all?
5	23 Jan 2013 9:48:01am	ST		racism	Maybe we can blame the book Eat,Pray and Love, whose author found love in Bali for this phenomenon. There was also a movie based on this best-seller..Feminists are reading too much into this, what about all the Internet dating...
6	22 Jan 2013 9:32:13pm	fantasy			Interesting. All I see when they play the Rhonda and Ketut ad is a woman who fell asleep on a sun lounge while wearing her sunglasses, had a pleasant dream about a guy and woke up with a sunburned face.
7	23 Jan 2013 10:10:58am	Fling			Shame on you for interpreting the commercial correctly.
8	22 Jan 2013 9:15:22pm	Fling			Why a 'paid' fling with an exotic foreigner? Why not just a fling? Is the author in the habit of frequenting brothels?
9	22 Jan 2013 8:39:26pm	ST	DS	buy sex is bad	Good point. Are we ready for female chauvinism and women behaving badly? Seems to me that is when the revolution will be complete!
10	22 Jan 2013 8:10:23pm	Sex tourism		MSW bad	It's one thing to sit at a wet-bar in Kuta sipping a prawn cocktail with a little umbrella stuck in the olive with a smiling lithe boy Ketut, yet another how he would shape up in the domestic arena. Does he understand the Nilfisk bagless vacuum cleaner with curtain attachments,the intricacies of a lawn mower with edge trimmer and most of all the skill in providing mortgage income and pay the AGL bills? I have seen those same boys in Bali playing chess on the street, smiling at the female tourists while their wives are climbing steep hills with bricks on their heads or woven baskets with cement mortar for the same bricks. It's not all as sunny as made out in the ads. Nothing ever is and the prawn cocktail soon sours in the sun and I have heard of some terrible bowel contractions while sitting at those wet-bars.
11	23 Jan 2013 8:41:51am				You mean a lemon, surely Gerard? No self respecting chef, would garnish a prawn cocktail with an olive. It would be like putting chocolate sauce on a rollmop :)
12	22 Jan 2013 8:08:37pm	ST	DS		Its pretty simple. The womens rights pendulum has swung so far that anything females like is OK and

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					anything males like is basically not alright. This of course is only an observation of public discourse. As an example, examine the way Aussie males are portrayed in ads on TV. If the genders were reversed, there would be howling outrage from womens lobby groups. Basically, men can accept the humor when someone takes the piss. Female lobby groups seemingly cannot. Withness "Kochgate".
13	22 Jan 2013 6:41:48pm	Fling		FST doesn't happen	No way the ad is about prostitution, no way the ad shows a much younger attractive male and older, unattractive female, no way can you validly assert "feminism" has liberated women to go overseas and partake in the sex trade. Your article is poorly conceived and executed.
14	22 Jan 2013 6:25:36pm	ST	DS		The third ad will involve Ketut foolishly drinking his rohypnol-laced drink and passing out to Rhonda's sinister laughter. Next time, he'll think twice about dismissing his bartender savvy. Plus an insurance claim will be involved, since it's AAMI. But we can't help that.
15	22 Jan 2013 6:16:14pm	Sex tourism		Clients are victims	Thailand is awash with stories of nurture starved, devalued, late middle-aged Western men, who believed what they were told by that sweet young honey who gave them their all. Lured in, they invest a lot. Hearts, emotions, and savings. To be taken so ruthlessly at that stage of life is devastating. Man or woman. Keeping it sex and brief = little risk! Linger? Buyer be very aware! So, thinking of a wee jaunt to The Gambia girls? If you are not the predatory sex tourist type, good luck!
16	22 Jan 2013 5:27:34pm	Sex tourism		SW is fair trade	In the mid 80's I worked at a pub. One of the bartenders, a Canadian, had just returned from 3 years in Hawaii where he had made his living as a gigolo. "Rich old white ladies", he said. So I guess it's nothing new, nor is it limited to developing nations.
17	23 Jan 2013 6:53:47am	Sex tourism		SW is fair trade	Jimmy: A mate of mine did the same thing in the 70's. An ex girlfriend of mine lived in Hong Kong and would think nothing of phoning a boy for the night whilst her husband was away on business. I think it is the extent of it that has changed. My mate and ex girlfriend were exceptions and remarkable in those days.
18	22 Jan 2013 5:14:53pm	fantasy			Unless the author is willing to make a fair comparison, he can't plead double standards. Ketut and Rhonda both look about thirty-five. The ads make it clear that Rhonda is fantasising about an erotic, romantic fling with Ketut - she's not actually having one (and if she were, it's their business) - and that Ketut is working as a waiter, not a gigolo. The author's clumsy attempts to portray the AAMI ads and films like Shirley Valentine and Under the Tuscan Sun as simply a gender role reversal of the of the sex tourism industry shows an alarming ignorance of patriarchal power dynamics.
19	22 Jan 2013 5:56:22pm				Thank you ABC for having something else besides the usual Labor/Liberal divide articles. I feel I now know some of my 'pen pals' better, we are all vulnerable human beings, not just members of Labor or Liberal parties... :)
20	22 Jan 2013 6:09:00pm	Sex tourism	DS		Is all ignorance of patriarchal power dynamics alarming? You may have just alienated or confused most of the bloggers here. But what of the substantial point? What of the equivalence of female sex tourism and male sex tourism? Your thoughts as a practising feminist please!
21	22 Jan 2013 7:37:33pm	fantasy			My comment was about using fair comparisons to make a fair analysis of a double standard, which this author failed to do. I was not commenting on the 'equivalence of male sex tourism and female sex tourism'. If you want that discussion, respond to the many comments here that deal with it, instead of sneering at me for using the P word. And why should you be so concerned that I may have 'alienated and confused' some bloggers here? This is a discussion forum, not a dating service.
22	23 Jan 2013 9:34:35am				Nah that wasn't sneering. I can do sneering. Talk about patriarchies goes over most bloggers heads, mine included. Others may well have rolled the eyes at language from a bygone time. I am disappointed that the more recognisable feminist names on the site haven't turned up here today. I would have been interested in their points of view. Hence my post to you. I was trying to prompt a response rather than a deflection. I don't think my posts generally come over as anti-feminist, in case you're concerned I was trying to needle you.
23	23 Jan 2013 9:13:35am				I'd add about 10 years to your estimate of Rhonda's age there.
24	22 Jan 2013 5:08:55pm	Sex tourism	DS	SW need protection	The assumption is that the male prostitute is there by choice and the female prostitute is not. However, that is just an assumption. Perhaps the male prostitute is being kept in virtual slavery by a bunch of abusive

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					women who take his earnings to ensure he cannot buy freedom. And perhaps the female prostitute has seen a business opportunity and is gleefully taking advantage of it. However, we will continue to look at the middle aged man as a pervert exploiting the locals, and the middle aged woman as a tourist having her dreams fulfilled until such time as that ceases to be the norm. Because whinging about role reversal does nothing to actually solve the real issues, which are simply that sex workers need to be protected from exploitation, regardless of gender.
25	22 Jan 2013 5:01:58pm				And isn't the bigger crime, after all, the implication of an overseas holiday at the expense of your insurance company?
26	22 Jan 2013 8:47:34pm				I think the AD implies that she can afford to go on holiday because their rates are so affordable and/or will save her money, not that she is committing insurance fraud.
27	22 Jan 2013 4:54:53pm	Sex tourism	DS	SW is fair trade	What's good for the goose is good for the gander. Or more appropriately, what's good for the gander is good for the goose! Who wouldn't want to gander as some geese at play! ME, that's who. But I don't care what they do as long as I don't have to watch it! ;)
28	22 Jan 2013 4:32:15pm	Fling	DS		Who cares! Whatever gets you through the night as long as it doesn't startle the horses. Men and women have been having extra-marital affairs since time began. Hey does any remember Sodom & Gomorrah now that was a do and a half. There is nothing new under the sun. Someone has already done it and got the t-shirt.
29	22 Jan 2013 4:13:55pm	Fling	DS		When will people learn to keep their noses out of other consenting adults sex lives? The critical postings here seem to trying to promote some sort of ideological mythology based on the most suppressed states of their own sexuality. The urge to interfere in the lives of other grown ups is disgusting. Australia must be the only country in the world where being a feminist means desperately trying to force women back into a patriarchal puritanical box like obsessed of Stockholm Syndrome sufferers. If people want to go off and have an adult romantic fling or even just erotic indulgence while on a holiday it is not anybodies business but their own no matter which sex they are or what orientation they have.
30	22 Jan 2013 4:40:01pm				What exactly are you getting at here, Bruce?
31	22 Jan 2013 4:02:33pm	Sex tourism		MST gluttons	Would there be a distinction in the number of partners men and women would seek in such situations? Would the women tend to be more monogamous (for a week) whereas FIFO guys would tend to act like gluttons at an all you can eat buffet, with maybe three partners a day? Does this somehow make women's fun less grubby? Just asking the question. Some here make a fair point about pimps swaying the power balance. Are they prevalent in such situations? Reports of some female Asian sex workers suggest they are (often?) rather free spirits just doing what they can to get ahead or to feed a nasty addiction. It doesn't sound like pimps are universal. Even if they were involved I would imagine experienced sex workers are as likely or more likely to be predators than prey in most of their transactions. Female Asian sex workers seem to have little respect for their foreign clientele, no doubt for good reason. Presumably male sex workers catering to foreign women have little more respect beyond professional courtesy. We can all choose our own perspectives here. We can see it as the sad and desperate acts of lonely people or we can look at it as just fun with few emotional consequences. Rationally I think I invest too much importance in the act, that I should be more able to divorce sex from emotions as others seem able to do. Who can fathom the reasons why they react as they do? FWIW I am sure paid sex is a regular feature of Australian tourism for many Asian visitors, at least among men. It's not just white cultural imperialists who are at it.
32	22 Jan 2013 3:49:39pm		DS		I read somewhere (?) maybe 3/4 years ago that 60% of men have "other sex outside the relationship" and only 40% of women? We know who is getting extra's!
33	23 Jan 2013 7:03:58am				That report was done in the 50's by Masters and Johnson, bet the numbers are about the same these days. Any researcher up for it we would all like to know?
34	22 Jan 2013 2:47:15pm	Sex tourism	DS	SW is fair trade	Jimmy Saville is not relevant as it was about under age girls and that is heinous and illegal. The participants here are over the age of consent. Can't see the attraction in the male version myself, though I once worked with a few old chaps who did just this. As far as I can see willingness is everything, but as far

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					as the feminists and media go it must be exploitation if the client is male. Not for me, but as Nigel points out, what would be the reaction if it was male? A huge outcry and calls to ban the ad I suspect. Maybe that is right, but it must be so for all.
35	22 Jan 2013 2:33:33pm				I am looking for Rhonda and Ketuts sex tape on the internet. Haven't found it yet.
36	23 Jan 2013 10:11:43am				Sorry Mark we're still in pre-production phase. I've been working hard casting the Rhonda character for the past couple of months. Will start actual filming in the next year or two.
37	22 Jan 2013 2:20:31pm		racism		Some like brown legs, some like white legs - most dream about something in between.
38	22 Jan 2013 3:19:43pm				Would that be the men or women dreaming?
39	22 Jan 2013 3:22:44pm				Well, Moly, I am not one of those people who dreams about you.
40	22 Jan 2013 2:19:58pm				"the first-world woman's fantasy of the perfect relationship: one in which she calls the shots and her partner magically combines primal alpha male sexiness with unflaggingly cheerful solicitousness." I laughed myself senseless over that one. That isn't a fantasy it's a delusion, and as a feminist, I've never desired anything like it. All I want is mutual love and understanding.
41	22 Jan 2013 2:04:27pm	Sex tourism	DS		Men have been doing it for aeons, so I don't see why women shouldn't. It's simply the goose and gander. By the same token, older men who engaged in such liaisons were broadly considered "dirty old men". Obviously, we can't now have "dirty old women", so the whole attitude landscape need to change. I accept your point, Nigel.
42	22 Jan 2013 3:17:13pm	Sex tourism	DS		Women have been doing it for aeons too. There were many matriarchal societies through history, including polygamous societies where it was normal for a woman to have many husbands. The "dirty old man" is denigrated but the "cougar" is seen as glamorous and empowering. I call double standard.
43	22 Jan 2013 1:54:18pm	Fling			Where in the ad does it show money being exchanged or mentioned? Its just a fling.
44	22 Jan 2013 3:14:39pm	Sex tourism		SW is exploitation	And how many such 'flings' are attempts to flee economic disadvantage by cosying up to a 'rich' white woman? If the man were financially comfortable would he be doing it? On the face of it, I'd suggest not. (Given the age difference, the attractiveness difference, and the general dopiness that 'Rhonda' seems to portray.) But then again that's reading WAAY too much into an ad.
45	22 Jan 2013 6:03:30pm	Sex tourism	DS	SW is fair trade	"If the man were financially comfortable would he be doing it?" Surprisingly, there are many jobs people only do because they are not financially comfortable. My own is an example.
46	23 Jan 2013 9:14:46am			SW is exploitation	Again this argument that prostitution is just another job. I don't believe that it is, and I think many people agree with me.
47	22 Jan 2013 1:26:54pm	Sex tourism	DS	SW is fair trade	"Money can't buy me love" but with our exchange rate "Sin City/Sex In the City" all rolled into one! Women with money, same as men with money in these third world nations...they should be charged a special "sex only tax" say \$500 for a two week stay, this will get these nations "developing" we once lived off the "sheep's back"? Life is cheap and if religion is dead, love went a while before it?
48	22 Jan 2013 1:19:34pm	Sex tourism		SW is fair trade	Is the moral question any different from the moral question raised by wearing clothes and stuff made by poor people working long hours in Chinese factories, which will leave China when China gets too expensive?
49	22 Jan 2013 3:10:27pm	Sex tourism			True, but at least we can choose not to engage in sex tourism. Where can I find manufactured goods that weren't made in Chinese sweatshops?
50	22 Jan 2013 6:04:30pm				the factory where I work

Appendix E

Participant Information Sheets and Consent Forms

Participant information statement and consent form for key informants



Centre for Social Research in Health

HREC Approval No: HC14298

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM

Women who buy sex
John de Wit, Chief Researcher

Introduction

You are invited to take part in this research project, which is called *women who buy sex*. You have been invited because you *have indicated an interest in your area through your work*. Your contact details were obtained *from your organisational webpage*.

This Participant Information Sheet/Consent Form tells you about the research project. It explains the processes involved with taking part. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to take part in the research.

What is the purpose of this research?

This project aims to find out about women buying sex in Australia and to present women's experiences as they describe them. There is a lot of information about men who buy and not much about women. There is a lot of misinformation and stigma about buying sex that this research aims to alleviate.

Why have I been invited to participate in this research?

You have been invited because this project aims to find out as much as possible about women who buy sex as well as asking women about their experiences..

Description of study procedures and risks

If you decide to participate, you will be interviewed for about 60 minutes about your experiences via telephone. If you agree, the interview will be recorded. It will be transcribed and your identifying details will be removed and your information will be kept private. There are few risks involved with participation. If you become upset at any time during the interview you can stop the interview and counselling services will be offered to you. You can withdraw your information from the study at any time until the information is de-identified. If you are interested in the study results you can add your email to the bottom of this form and a summary sheet of key findings will be sent to you on completion of the study. Your email will not be used for any other purpose, will be stored separately to the data, and will be destroyed upon study completion.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

There are no remunerations for participation in the study. We cannot and do not guarantee or promise that you will receive any benefits from this study. However, you may enjoy telling your story and having a voice.

What are the alternatives to participation?

Participation in this research is voluntary. If you don't wish to take part, you don't have to. Your decision not to participate will not affect your future relations with the University of New South Wales.

Confidentiality and disclosure of information

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission, except as required by law. If you give us your permission by signing this document, we plan to *discuss/publish* the results at conferences, in journal articles in popular press and in a final thesis. In any publication, information will be provided in such a way that you cannot be identified unless you indicate that you wish to be identified.

Complaints

Complaints may be directed to the Ethics Secretariat, The University of New South Wales, SYDNEY 2052 AUSTRALIA (phone (02) 9385 4234, fax (02) 9385 6222, email humanethics@unsw.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be investigated promptly and you will be informed of the outcome.

Feedback to participants

If you are interested in feedback after the study is completed, you can register your email to receive updates about where the study has been published.

Your consent

Your decision whether or not to participate will not prejudice your future relations with the University of New South Wales. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation at any time without prejudice.

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask us. If you have any additional questions later, Hilary on 0403084910, will be happy to answer them.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM

(continued)

Women who buy sex
John de Wit, Chief Researcher

Declaration by Participant

I have read the Participant Information Sheet or someone has read it to me in a language that I understand.

I understand the purposes, procedures and risks of the research described in the project.

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and I am satisfied with the answers I have received.

I freely agree to participate in this research project as described and understand that I am free to withdraw at any time during the project without affecting my future care.

I understand that I will be given a signed copy of this document to keep.

.....
Signature of Research Participant

.....
Signature of Witness

.....
(Please PRINT name)

.....
(Please PRINT name)

.....
Date

.....
Nature of Witness

.....
Email for research summary (if desired)

REVOCATION OF CONSENT

Women who buy sex

John de Wit, Chief Researcher

I hereby wish to **WITHDRAW** my consent to participate in the research proposal described above and understand that such withdrawal **WILL NOT** jeopardise any treatment or my relationship with The University of New South Wales,

.....
Signature

.....
Date

.....
Please PRINT Name

The section for Revocation of Consent should be forwarded to:

Professor John de Wit

j.dewit@unsw.edu.au

Participant information sheet and consent form for women who buy sex

Centre for Social Research in Health

HREC Approval No: HC14298

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM

Women who buy sex

Hilary Caldwell, PhD candidate

Under the supervision of Chief researcher: Professor John de Wit

Introduction

You are invited to take part in this research project, which is called *women who buy sex*. You have been invited because you *have indicated that you have bought sex*. Your contact details were obtained *from the contact you made in response to a newspaper advertisement*.

This Participant Information Sheet/Consent Form tells you about the research project. It explains the processes involved with taking part. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to take part in the research.

What is the purpose of this research?

This project aims to find out about women buying sex in Australia and to present women's experiences as they describe them. There is a lot of information about men who buy and not much about women. There is a lot of misinformation and stigma about buying sex that this research aims to alleviate.

Why have I been invited to participate in this research?

You have been invited because you indicated that you are a woman who has bought sex in Australia.

Description of study procedures and risks

If you decide to participate, you will be interviewed for about 60 minutes about your experiences, via telephone. If you agree, the interview will be recorded. It will be transcribed and your identifying details will be removed. Your information will be kept private. There are few risks involved with participation. If you become upset at any time during the interview you can stop the interview and counselling services will be offered to you. You can withdraw your information from the study at any time until the information is de-identified. If you are interested in the study results you can add your email to the bottom of this form and a summary sheet of key findings will be sent to you on completion of the study. Your email will not be used for any other purpose, will be stored separately to the data, and will be destroyed upon study completion.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

There are no remunerations for participation in the study. We cannot and do not guarantee or promise that you will receive any benefits from this study. You may enjoy telling your story and having a voice.

What are the alternatives to participation?

Participation in this research is voluntary. If you don't wish to take part, you don't have to. Your decision not to participate will not affect your future relations with the University of New South Wales.

Confidentiality and disclosure of information

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission, except as required by law. If you give us your permission by signing this document, we plan to *discuss/publish* the results at conferences, in journal articles in popular press and in a final thesis. In any publication, information will be provided in such a way that you cannot be identified.

Complaints

Complaints may be directed to the Ethics Secretariat, The University of New South Wales, SYDNEY 2052 AUSTRALIA (phone (02) 9385 4234, fax (02) 9385 6222, email humanethics@unsw.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be investigated promptly and you will be informed of the outcome.

Feedback to participants

If you are interested in feedback after the study is completed, you can register your email to receive updates about where the study has been published.

Your consent

Your decision whether or not to participate will not prejudice your future relations with the University of New South Wales. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation at any time without prejudice.

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask us. If you have any additional questions later, Hilary on 0403084910, will be happy to answer them.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM (continued)

*Women who buy sex
Hilary Caldwell, Student Researcher*

Declaration by Participant

I have read the Participant Information Sheet or someone has read it to me in a language that I understand.

I understand the purposes, procedures and risks of the research described in the project.

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and I am satisfied with the answers I have received.

I freely agree to participate in this research project as described and understand that I am free to withdraw at any time during the project without affecting my future care.

I understand that I will be given a signed copy of this document to keep.

.....
Signature of Research Participant

.....
Signature of Witness

.....
(Please PRINT name)

.....
(Please PRINT name)

.....
Date

.....
Nature of Witness

.....
Email for research summary (if desired)

REVOCATION OF CONSENT

Women who buy sex

Hilary Caldwell, Student Researcher

I hereby wish to **WITHDRAW** my consent to participate in the research proposal described above and understand that such withdrawal **WILL NOT** jeopardise any treatment or my relationship with The University of New South Wales,

.....
Signature

.....
Date

.....
Please PRINT Name

The section for Revocation of Consent should be forwarded to:

Professor John de Wit
j.dewit@unsw.edu.au

Appendix F

Recruitment Advertising

Advertisement for publication in free online sites to recruit women who buy sex

Women buying sex? Do you work with women who buy sexual services or know much about what is happening? If so, you are invited to participate in a study being conducted through the University of New South Wales. You can find out more here: <https://csr.h.arts.unsw.edu.au/research/join-a-study/>



Webpage for potential key informant participants Research Portal hosted by CSRH UNSW

RECRUITING NOW Women Who Buy Sex

When women buy sex, arguments regarding the sex industry based on notions of gendered power imbalances are disrupted. Newspapers and other media typically represent females consuming sexual services and commodities as evidence of women's growing sexual confidence and of a new and progressive view of sexuality.

There is a lack of empirical evidence about women buying sex in Australia. This study will address the gap by exploring the phenomenon of women buying sex; how they do, why they do and what it means to them. This qualitative project will also explore the social context and climate in which women buy sex.

Who are we looking for?

People who know something about, or work with women who buy sexual experience in Australia. Key informants may be sexual health clinicians, policy makers, peer-service providers to sex workers, opinion leaders, sex workers, or sex educators/therapists/trainers who use physical touch. Women who buy sex will be sought for interview at a later stage of the project.

What's involved?

A confidential telephone interview lasting 30 minutes, exploring the following concepts:

- The definition of commercial sex for women
- The importance of women buying sex
- Gender differences in buying sex
- Sexual service providers will be asked about their services, clientele and, language and culture.

No reimbursement for expenses or remuneration is available for participation. Your participation will contribute to new and significant knowledge about female sexuality and the sex industry.

This study is led by the Centre for Social Research in Health at UNSW. It has received ethics approval from the UNSW Human Research Ethics Committee, with reference: HC14298.

To find out more or take part

Contact Ms Hilary Caldwell h.caldwell@student.unsw.edu.au Please feel free to ask questions about the study without obligation to participate.

Editorial contribution to be provided to media who request more information about the study

Women Buy Sex Too!

A new study in Australia aims to find out how and why women buy sex. UNSW PhD student, Hilary Caldwell, is undertaking the research. 'Most people only think about men as engaging in commercial sexual arrangements and are not aware that a growing number of women do as well', said Ms Caldwell. 'Most of the discussions around women buying sex occur in the absence of evidence.'

Ms Caldwell said that recent discussions about sex work with reference to the 'Nordic' and other models of regulating the commercial sex industry do not take into account

that women buy sex as well as men and that puts into question gender and power arguments against the sex industry.

A Google search of ‘male escorts for women in Australia’, shows that this market is very much alive. However, when 9134 women participating in the 2003 Australian Study of Health and Relationships were asked if they had paid for sex, only 0.1% admitted that they had. This same study found that about 16% of men had ever paid for sex. Sex industry reports suggest that female clients might account for 6% of commercial sexual services and this market share is increasing.

‘The reasons why we don’t really know much about women’s use of commercial sexual services are complex,’ said Ms Caldwell. ‘How do you classify a sexual service when payment is made with gifts and not money? Is it a sexual service if a woman wants romance more than sex? What if a commercial sexual experience also involves aspects of education such as in tantric therapy or therapeutic touch such as body work? We might not have the right answers because we may not be asking the right questions.’

Studies of men who buy sex have consistently shown very small differences between men who buy sex and men who do not. Yet men who buy sex are often characterised as deviant, exercising an entitlement to women’s bodies, and in some jurisdictions they are criminalised. On the other hand, women who buy sex have been most often described as lonely, hopeless romantics, or as victims of aggressive male sex worker grooming. Without evidence of how women experience buying sex, these characterisations and double standards remain uncontested.

‘While speaking with friends and colleagues about my research, a broad range of women have told me that they have paid for sex or are considering paying for sex’, Caldwell said. ‘Some are career women short on time, some are physically or socially disabled, while others are in sexually unsatisfying but otherwise healthy relationships. While it can be argued

that women can get sex whenever they want it, many women don't want to pick up or have casual sex. Paying for sex might seem like a safe option for those who desire discretion, convenience and even an expert.'

Are you a woman who knows what she wants and pays for it? If you have paid for sex in Australia, I may like to interview you about your experiences for a research project. Everything you tell me will be kept entirely confidential. Check out the study page here: (link to website). Do you know a woman who pays for sex? Send her the link!

Hilary Caldwell is a PhD research candidate at UNSW.

Appendix G

Interview Guides

Interview guide for sex workers who have female clients

1. Clientele. Questions included: ‘How many female clients do you service? Can you describe general characteristics of your female clients?’
2. Services. An initial question was: ‘What types of services do women buy?’ In addition, market forces were explored through questions such as; ‘What do services cost? Do you charge the same rates for male and female clients? How do women find out about your service and contact you? How do women behave when they buy sex?’
3. Language and culture. Questions included: ‘Is there a particular language that women use when negotiating buying sex, for instance in regard to romance versus sex, or the use of euphemisms and metaphors such as ‘natural’ versus ‘without a condom or dam? Do women who buy sex do this differently than men who buy sex? How does your gender role and identity affect your service with female clients?’
4. What is included as commercial sex? Sex workers were asked what they include as commercial sex and if they consider commercial sex for men and women in the same way. Specific questions to guide further exploration of their inclusions were: ‘Is erotic massage or dance considered commercial sex for men and/or women? If negotiations for services focus upon romance or escort and sex ‘happens’ within that context, is it commercial sex?’
5. The importance of women buying sex. Questions were asked about the significance of female clients more broadly, for example ‘Do women buying sex represent an at-risk group for sexually transmitted infections? Are models of regulation of the sex industry gendered in terms of language and enactment?’

6. Gender differences in buying sex. Sex workers were asked questions about gender, such as; ‘Do men and women have the same choices when buying sex? Do men and women chose to buy sex for the same reasons? Do men and women behave in the same way when they buy sex? Are the risks and benefits of buying sex the same for men and women?’

7. Recruitment. Sex workers were encouraged to ask their peers if they would like to participate and to pass details of the study onto them.

Interview guide for use with women who have bought sex

Interview questions will assist with obtaining information regarding the following:

1. Socio-demographics such as age, relationship status, educational level, ethnicity, and income.

2. Motivations to buy sex. Previous studies about men who buy sex have demonstrated that wanting sex per se is often not the primary motivator for buying sex. Participants will be asked questions to explore the multiple reasons that women might buy sex, for example: ‘How did you know that you could buy sex? Were you in a relationship when you decided to buy sex? What other factors influenced your desire to buy sex, such as how you felt about your other relationships, or religious and moral beliefs? What expectations did you have about paying for sex before you did it?’

3. Types of sexual services. It is expected that women will have diverse experiences about buying sex, requiring direct questioning to clarify what type of service and the level of experience that each participant has had. For example: ‘How did you choose the particular service that you bought the first time? What steps did you follow to buy sex the first time? When was that? What type of sexual service did you buy?’ Further questioning about location, cost and payment methods, age, ethnicity and gender of sex workers and,

frequency of services will be asked to gain more understanding about the available services for women. These might include the use of escort services, transactional sex when goods or services might be exchanged for sex, ‘hands on’ sexual education, erotic massage or specialist services such as bondage and discipline.

4. Accessibility of sexual services. Some debate about women buying sex has argued that women cannot access sexual services in the same way as men due to availability or to conformity to gender roles. To gain understanding about particular barriers or gateways to buying sex, questions will be asked including: ‘Was it easy to buy sex? Were there any barriers to buying sex? How did you overcome them?’

5. Outcomes of sexual services. Questions will be asked about what actually happened, for example, ‘Did the service meet your expectations? Did you buy sex again with the same worker? Were there any unexpected positive or negative consequences? Do you feel any differently about yourself and your sexuality since buying sex? Do you plan to buy sex in the future?’ Further questions are designed to get a sense of what is happening within a sexual service in terms of dis/connection and intimacy and/or emotional involvement and may shed some light on the behaviour of participants when they buy sex, for example: ‘How would you describe the relationship you have with your sex worker/s?’ Specific questions will be asked about safety including; ‘Were you under the influence of any drugs or alcohol at the time of buying sex? Did you use condoms/dams when you paid for sex?’

6. Power relations in sexual services. Questions will be asked to explore the relationship between consumer gender and power, including: ‘To what extent were you able to/did you/could you state what you expected physically from the service? Did the service provider understand your requirements and fulfil them? Did you feel in control of the situation at all times during the service?’

7. Sense of stigma. Questions regarding secrecy and level of disclosure will be asked, and include: 'Have you told anyone else about buying sex? What would friends or family think about you if they knew that you bought sex? Would you recommend buying sex to a friend?'

Appendix H

Participant Summary Example

Women who buy sex – Key Informant Interviews

Participant Summary Template

Key Characteristics

Interview number: 15

Interview date and time: 9/2/15 7pm

Type of key informant: Gay male sex worker NSW

Sex workers – numbers of female clients, types/prices of services: in 20 years of sex work, he has had periods of experimentation with female clients. He has never been straight for pay, but always a gay man servicing women. This was reassuring to some WBS and may have seemed like a challenge to others.

Emerging themes

- 1) the definition of commercial sex. Same for men and women. But he thinks that society tries to sanitise female sexuality by denying that they can be clients the same as men. He is passionately angry about the way laws are enacted to rescue only women SW and also racially targeting female Asian SW. He sees this 'rescue' narrative as a cover for punishing the fallen women.
- 2) the choices of women buying sex. Women have fewer choices about providers when buying sex but the internet and mobile phones make it just as easy.
- 3) gender differences in buying sex. He has a conflict between feeling empathic with women because he is also attracted to men, but he felt that the sexual games that women play were too foreign for him to enjoy. He enjoyed a couple of 3 some but there was another male present. He enjoyed the healing. But he also felt that some female clients were insatiable and not responsive to his tantric focus, and some women ordered him around and he felt used.
- 4) for sex workers – language used, cultural differences in gendered services. he definitely uses sexual healing language. He always uses safer sex practices with women and perhaps more so than with male clients as he is hyper vigilant.
- 4) other topics

He has not advertised for women but received referrals mainly from clients and psych professionals. He has seen couples where the male was a client, he has been a sexual healer in formal surrogacy. He likes the therapeutic nature of the work. Some did not involve penis in

vagina. He is keen to find out about the motivations of WBS because he thinks that men mainly seek intimacy and he thinks that women might mainly seek sexual satisfaction (when not seeking sexual healing).

Reflective notes (was I on time, prepared, AV all OK. Did I avoid using informants name? Did I ask open/closed questions effectively? Did my tone lead the participant to answer in certain ways? What are my strengths and weaknesses? How can I improve?)

I negotiated with this guy for 3 months for this interview and it was worthwhile.

Post transcription: What a lovely man! He laughed a lot and he cried when he spoke of the women who came to him for sexual healing. At the end he thanked me for giving him the opportunity to talk about these experiences and give him 'closure'. I do feel that this project has given me far more than data.

Appendix I**Sex Worker Characteristics**

Interview No	Gender ID	Role	Role 2	Orientation ID	State
1	Female	Sex Worker		Same sex attracted	WA
2	Female	Sex Worker		Lesbian	NSW
3	Female	Sex Worker	SWOP Rep	Bisexual	ACT
4	Female	Sex Worker		Gay for Pay	QLD
5	Female	Sex Worker		Pansexual	NSW
6	Female	Sex Worker		Bisexual	VIC
7	Male	BodyWorker		n/a	QLD
8	Female	Masseur		Bisexual	WA
9	Female	Strip/Porn		Queer	NSW
10	Female	Scarlet Alliance Rep		n/a	NSW
11	Male	Sex Worker		Straight	NSW
12	Male	Sex Worker	SA male rep	Straight for Pay	NSW
13	NonGender	Sex Worker		Queer	VIC
14	Male	Sex Worker		Gay	NSW
15	Male	Sex Worker		Straight	VIC
16	Female	Sex Worker		Queer	NSW
17	Male	Sex Worker		Straight	NSW

Appendix J

Women Who Bought Sex Characteristics

	Age (Bought Sex)	Relationship	Education	Income	State	Motivations	Types of services
1	24	Male partner	Secondary	Medium	NSW	Fun learning	3some with Mpartner BDSM with FSW Vanilla with MSW (no penis in vagina)
2	45 (20)	Female partner	-	Low-high	VIC	Fun	Strip, BDSM
3	45	Male partner	Post Grad	High	VIC	Heal from CSA, Learn	BDSM, Bodywork
4	50	Single (poly)	Post Grad	Low	VIC	To Heal Internal Transphobia	Bodywork (forgot) BDSM
5	35	Single	Post Grad	Low	VIC	Fun Learn, therapy	3some with F partner MSW Bodywork (forgot), Tantric
6	40	Single	Post Grad	High	NSW	Male partners wish	3some with Mpartner MSW
7	27	Single	Grad	Low	VIC	Assert feminism	Straight MSW
8	45 (19)	Male partner	Post Grad	High	VIC	Wants power, fun	60-80 St MSW, FSW
9	30	Single	Secondary	Low/Medium	SA	Control, fun	St MSW
10	51	Single	Secondary	Medium	NSW	Safety	St MSW
11	48	Married	Post Grad	High	NSW	To feel desired	St MSW
12	37	Single	Post Grad	Medium	NSW	Vaginismus, Physio bent	St MSW
13	50	Single	Grad	High	NSW	Heal IPV	St MSW
14	46	Married	Grad	Medium	NSW	To feel desired	St MSW
15	40	Single	Secondary	Medium	Reg NSW	Heal CSA	St MSW
16	69	Married	Post Grad	Medium	VIC	Inconvenient libido	St MSW

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17	37	Single	Grad	High	NSW	Vaginismus	St MSW
18	40 (22)	Single	Post Grad	High	QLD	Fun	3some FSW, strip
19	49	Single	Post Grad	Medium	ACT	Practise	St MSW
20	35	Married	Grad	Medium	SA	Bi-curious = bi	1 st 3some FSW, FSW
21	27 (18)	Single	Post Grad	Medium	SA	Fun	FSW, strip

