Discipline, Autonomy and Ambiguity:
Organisations, Markets and Work in the Sex Industry,
Christchurch, New Zealand

A THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN SOCIOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY

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a la memoria de

Jesús Pérez-y-Pérez 1934-1997

siempre con nosotras
Research into prostitution has concentrated on the 'visible' forms of street work and massage parlours and has represented the sex worker - client relation through discourses of exploitation, coercion or the 'victimised' prostitute. This thesis argues that the competing but overlapping markets of massage parlours, escort work and telephone sex are assembled and reassembled through out patterns of conflict and cooperation between diverse actors and groups of actors. These actors include the police, sex workers, prostitutes' collectives, managers, local councils and the media. The thesis focuses upon the diverse ways in which these actors combine in the sex industry in the specific locale of Christchurch. Attention is also paid to the specific ways in which the institutions of the massage parlour, escort services and telephone sex are organised as workplaces. This is made possible by drawing upon detailed empirical evidence collected through participant observation, in which I worked as a receptionist in two Christchurch massage parlours, and via the mobilisation of networks/connections assembled through my own work in the sex industry. The similarities and differences between the sex work institutions are documented and it is argued that the coercive, disciplinary form of management in the legal massage parlour arises out of the peculiar combination of official bureaucratic organisation and self-employed 'illegal' work. By contrast, 'illegal' escort services are characterised by forms of autonomous organisation that include cooperative arrangements between groups of women, small firms that hire support services and single operators. Telephone (simulated) sex is not covered by specific legislation and firms operate by embedding themselves in the service arrangements of telecommunication companies. A more general argument is made concerning the nature of paid work in the sex industry. Sex work is represented as normal by prostitutes' collectives working on behalf of sex workers but is experienced as stigmatised by these workers. This ambiguity regarding the work is emphasised in sex workers' discourses. These stress the normal, professional nature of paid work but their arguments are combined with both a strong desire to remain invisible and anonymous and a preference for informal arrangements with the police and other actors such as local councils. It is suggested that moves towards decriminalising sex work, which are aimed at making the work legal and visible, may introduce much stricter and tighter forms of regulation than currently exist.
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In this chapter I draw on the genre of the confession to provide a space for one woman's voice. Claudia's story as given to me, and edited by me, is presented as a way into the sex work industry that situates in the everyday language of the sex worker. Claudia speaks to her reasons for entry as an 18 year old girl into the industry, her ways of working and coping with the work. As a sex worker she is reflexively aware of how her work is situated by others.

She draws on her memory of how she learned the job and how practices have changed. For example, the use of condoms with clients, considered the exception when she entered the industry is now the norm. She notes how she moved between prostitution and 'straight' work and how managing her identity was problematic. She reflects on how the sex worker in massage parlours is disciplined, and throughout she reflects on money, negotiating for it in the 'room', and the differences in payment systems between the massage parlour and escort services.

Claudia's focus is on the honour involved in selling sexual services as work. She speaks as a worker who is concerned with her health and acutely sensitive to the way in which she is paid. She is aware of the different degrees of autonomy facilitated by different payment systems. She presents herself as a reliable worker in a stigmatised industry. Her stress on identity seeks to overcome the ambiguities associated with quasi-legal work.

**Honour and the exchange of Sexual Services**

*Being a hooker wasn't exactly what I had aspired to be when I was at school. I had wanted to be all the usual stuff, you know, like an air hostess, nurse, teacher, but a*
hooker never featured on the list. So, I guess I got into it for the same reasons as everybody else, for the money. After leaving school I had had a series of office jobs, being the 'general dogs body'. I had no formal qualifications and so I just fell into that type of work, the pay was crap but it just seemed the thing to do. One day I just got fed up and left a 'dead end' office job, and assumed that I'd find something else straight away. It had been easy enough to get a job when I left school and I thought I'd find something else pretty quickly, but things had changed since then, and of course I was getting into debt, you know, with credit cards and even my car was going to be repossessed. It was getting out of control. I kept seeing these ads for masseurs. I didn't know anyone who had done it, and didn't know if you just did massage, but had heard that you can make a good bit of money. I must admit that I was a bit green! I just went along to a place that advertised in the paper and more or less started there and then. They just sent me through with a man straight after the interview. You know, looking back, I guess I was lucky that he was a nice person. I mean, he basically told me what to do, and gave me money! I thought 'whew' this is pretty easy. Working in a parlour didn't seem to me to have that 'prostitute' label as much as say, well, the street work or whatever. Parlours, well, they are businesses and advertise in the paper and in the phone book. They're allowed to be there, and you actually have to give a massage which is like a reason to be there, you know, in that it's not just a bonk.

The first parlour I ever worked in was owned by Bryan Teale, one of the main parlour owners in Christchurch, who doesn't have a very good reputation I might add, quite a renowned name in the industry. He was around quite a bit to oversee things and was an intimidating figure to an 18 year old girl. I mean, you just did what you were told and asked no questions. When I think back, I didn't have any idea about the job really, it was just a case of 'bluffing' my way through it (laughs). I'd thought, 'well, it's sex and we all know how to do that', but then you soon learn pretty damn quickly that there's more to it than 'just sex', especially if you want to make money. I mean, some of the women were making wads of cash with a string of regulars. Of course it was really busy back then, and they would brag about how easy it was, and that they wouldn't dream of bonking the guy for any more than 6 minutes at the most. Well, me being so naive about it all wondered what the hell they did for the rest of the time (laughs). But it all came down to getting them, the clients, so worked up by other means, by doing other things, that by the time you got down to it, well it would be just about over, or you'd hope. And years later when I got back into the business again I was doing the exact same thing. Something I learned the hard way is that you've got to take care of your body and not let them bang
away for the time that they booked in for the full half hour or whatever. It just all gets too much at the end of a shift and you’ve had say 5 clients and you can’t walk.

And another thing, when I first started working I wasn’t even aware of safe sex, like using condoms and stuff, or the dangers and risks of unprotected sex. To be perfectly honest I never really used condoms back then, particularly in my private life. It seemed to be the common assumption back then, in the 80s that the man would do it, take care of it. I mean, now it just horrifies me to even think that I never got anything really nasty by doing that, ugh, the thought of doing it now without a condom turns my stomach. It wasn’t until I had worked a few nights that one of the older ladies, well, she seemed older and more experienced, but then again to an 18 year old in that business, everyone seemed older! Anyway, she told me about you know, KY and condoms and things. I had been going about ‘it’ without using anything, I think she felt sorry for me when I told her. I had no idea about lubricants, safe sex, dental dams and stuff. I was just going about it like normal and didn’t realise that there was stuff you could use to make it easier, safer and a bit more pleasant, particularly knowing about lube, I mean obviously it makes the job a whole lot easier. I mean I’d encountered situations where it was quite painful to say the least without lube. I was just so naive about it all. It’s shocking to think that no-one thought to ask you at the interview if you knew anything about lubes and condoms.

My clients had to help me and show me how to put the condoms on properly at the start, and from then on I just fiddled around and worked it out from there. I think you develop your own technique I suppose. It’s not that hard, it’s pretty obvious what you’ve got to do with them, something you improve at through use though, like I can put them on with my mouth now. I learned how to do that through one of the girls that I worked with. I remember she showed me using a bottle, but there’s quite a difference between a bottle and a live penis with a man attached to it. Part of it is that you’ve got to make using condoms a sexy thing. The guys think that it’s great that you can put them on with your mouth, it’s a big turn on for them. Anyway, once I’d found out about how to use condoms properly, I tried to use them most of the time, but I’d get the odd couple of guys now and then, who’d talk me into doing it without condoms. There’s no way would I do that now!

It’s not as if there wasn’t any benefits in the job, I mean, it was excellent money back then, you know I’m talking about earning 5, 6, 700 dollars a night at least, and working probably 4 or 5 nights a week. The draw back was that you didn’t work when you wanted to, you worked when you were told to. Again, Miss Naïve, I really thought that I’d have
the option and work just one or two days a week, but I was just told quite emphatically 'you are on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday’, and that was it, there was no question of it, you did it. Maybe if I had been a little more assertive, then things might have been a little different, but in that place, you generally did what you were told, and didn’t question it.

Not all the clients were paying either, sometimes a lot of 'straight’ clients would come in and we were expected to do them. The business had spa pools and a sauna, and guys used to come in for that and to gawk at the girls and stuff. The business used to charge for the massage and the use of the spa and sauna and that, but we didn't get paid by the management for giving a massage. The way we made money was through the ‘extras’ which we negotiated with the clients once we got them through to the room. So, ‘straight’ clients are a waste of our time, and if you could avoid them you did. But in this place it was the older more experienced women who knew how to do this without getting the management's backs up. Whereas someone like me, new to it all, would have to do them. I'd never go along with that now, but that's easy for me to say now. I mean, we would have to sit up till 8 o’clock in the morning for guys that you knew were ‘straights’ and the only money to be made would be going to the business and nothing to the girls, that’s a horrible situation and something I just wouldn’t put up with now.

The ladies would always talk about the different parlours where they've worked, you know, and how much they made at this place, how busy it was there, or how nice such and such place is, which made me realise that not every where was the same. So, I decided to try somewhere else for a bit. I started at C which had been recommended, and as it turned out it was another Bryan Teale place, but was run by a female manager, and a much nicer set up. I suppose you could say that it was a little more upmarket, more 'classy' (in a derogatory tone) than the last one, nicely decorated and that, with a lounge area where you met the clients individually before they made a choice. There was still a 'dress policy', the girls had to be tidy, presentable and well groomed in dresses or suit, whereas the other place preferred the girls to sit around in lingerie and that sort of thing. If you didn’t follow the rules, you were sent home, not fined like the other place, but sent home. I never found it hard to comply, it's like having to wear a uniform in a way, it's not really asking that much and obviously you need to make an effort. I'd say that it was quite a well organised place and I ended up staying there for a few weeks until I’d paid off my debts. The thing I didn't like though was that if anyone paid by credit card or eftpos, then that money automatically went on credit fees, a credit system for shift fees where you sort
of accrued money for fees. I wasn’t too happy about it. The shift fees were something like $10 an initial start off fee for just being there and then it was $3 for every client and after your third client requests were free. It was a bit steep for back then, but then you pay for the type of place you work in. I used to be quite busy there. There were no all-inclusive prices there...everything was negotiated in the room, and you still had the risk of the odd straight though.

I think I worked at C for a couple of months, I had managed to get enough money to pay my bills, but I didn’t save as much as I should have. I have always wasted a lot of money while I have been working in this industry. It’s one of the drawbacks of the job, after a time of famine all of a sudden you’re making wads of cash and so you begin to treat yourself to things you couldn’t have before. In a way, it helps to make what you’re doing worthwhile, to sort of justify it and to make yourself feel better about doing it. Then again it’s difficult to do anything sensible with it, I mean, it’s illegal money and all that, and of course you’d get people asking questions, like, ‘hmmm I wonder where she’s getting all this cash from?’ and, ‘how can she afford that?’ you know, so you spend it on stupid stuff, or buy more stuff for work, but that’s not saying that I didn’t enjoy what I bought or what I did with it all though!

Anyway, I did go back to a straight job, like I said I would, maybe not as fast as I should have, and then I thought that ‘I’m never ever doing that again’. I never told a soul about it, I just had to come up with some bullshit to tell my friends about what I was doing and where I was getting the money from during that time. Probably some of them weren’t as stupid as I thought they were. I found it quite a stress having to cover myself when I was still working and it was a relief not to have to do it anymore. But after a few years working in straight jobs I got back into hooking again. At the back of my mind I knew that if anything went wrong, I always had ‘hooking’ to get me through if I needed to get out of a shitty job or situation. At the time, I was working in another office job. The job was terrible, the boss was nasty and I had just had enough. I needed cash quickly as I was getting married in 3 months, I didn’t have any savings to go towards anything. Studio 14B was advertising for masseurs in the paper, and I particularly remember that the ad stated lady owner. I liked the sound of that I had an interview and I couldn’t believe that things could be so different. Studio 14B was such a nice place, and F, the owner showed me around, explained the management rules, prices and services that they offered. It all seemed to be so much more professional, like it felt more like a real job, and what I liked was the fact that F had worked before and so could see things from the girls’ point of view.
too. Anyway, I had only intended to stay there until I got the money for the wedding and then look at getting something else, but weeks turned into months and months into years and before I knew it I was totally entrenched in it, oh yeah and of course the wedding didn't eventuate.

So, like I said, Studio 14B was a bit of a different set up to the other places. F used to call it a 'gentleman's club' for a start. She had a licensed bar in the place, in fact it was the only parlour in Christchurch to have one, and we were all expected to dress to the occasion, you know, on the night shift you had to wear either evening or cocktail dresses or a suit. You had to wear good lingerie and stockings which were actually compulsory, you actually got fined if you weren't wearing stockings. So I bought a lot of nice stuff for work, nothing cheap and nasty, but most of the things apart from the suits that I wear for work, I wouldn't dream of wearing outside because they are probably too titty or when you sit down they part and you see your stockings. That's okay for the work situation, but you wouldn't want to be walking into a hotel like that. So we used to have to bring long dressy coats to work for 'out-calls'. F put together a book which set out a dress code for the girls, you know, from stockings to make-up and hair, how to talk to clients, just about everything, and we called the Studio 14B 'bible'.

There was a way of doing things at Studio 14B that made it not so nasty, if you know what I mean. Like when the clients came into the parlour, they were introduced to all the girls who were working. This was usually done by the receptionist, or whoever opened the door. We had to be sitting around the bar with our cigarettes extinguished and no sign of the stuff we had been doing before they had arrived. The bar area was quite big, with a pool table and lots of tables and chairs and sofas, F had done it out really well and it looked like one of those intimate clubs. So, when the client came in, it was more like a bar scene you know, rather than a cattle market with the girls lined up to take your pick. I mean, we were expected to chat to the clients. You see, because we had a bar, then they were allowed to come in and have a drink before they had to book a massage, or you know just check out the place and for some, to sniff around the girls. Of course you get the odd ones who used to abuse this system and try to stay as long as they could and it was up to the receptionist to make sure that this didn't happen. I hated having to do this because they didn't always book in and you can spend half an hour talking rubbish, bored off you head and he doesn't book in. You can spend a lot of time just waiting in this job, waiting for clients to come in, waiting for clients to make up their minds, waiting for them to book in.
We had this table tucked away behind the screen where we would all sit gossiping, sitting around the table like a bunch of cackling old hens can be a way of passing the night! Some girls brought in sewing, knitting, or homework. Some of the girls there were at polytech and university. So we’d just end up sitting around there, smoking, drinking or whatever until the buzzer went and then we’d have to quickly pull ourselves together. And then it’s all go, smiles, wiggles, all show, you know once the client comes in.

You know, to a certain extent, you have to be an actor to do this job. You've got to be nice, interesting, basically try to be who you think that they want you to be, that's if you want to be picked and then get them to come back and see you, which is the main idea. You still had the situation of getting picked at Studio 14B. And I think it’s an awful situation of having to be picked. I mean it’s hard not to take it all too personally. I mean, it’s not very nice if you have been sitting with a man for half an hour chatting away and when you ask him if he’s ready to go through and he says ‘oh is that girl over there available!’ Or there’s the guys that come in, have a drink, look around and then ask ‘is there anyone else’. You know, some of them just don’t bother trying to be tactful at all. And, I think that you had to put a bit more work into it at Studio 14B. With the ‘cattle market’ way of doing it, lining up and getting them to chose then and there, well there’s no pretending or lengthy discussions, it’s a matter of, there’s the choice and the client has to make it and tell the receptionist which one he wants and off you go. At Studio 14B, they wanted it, well, it was supposed to be more subtle and ‘sensitive’ both for the girls as well as for the clients, and so what that meant was, well was that the girls had to do more work, which is always the way in this business, talking to these guys and asking them when they were ready to go through. But then if someone was taking an exceptionally long time to decide then it was the receptionist’s job to encourage them to make that choice. But having said that, then you can get some slack receptionists that just let guys in to sit at the bar all night and we were expected to keep them company. And at the same time there’s the possibility that you might miss out on some work. So you end up watching the dollars ticking by.

Then there’s the chance of you getting a 'straight', straight clients are always a hazard of the job. I didn't encounter that many at Studio 14B, I think some of the other ladies may have got a lot more of them. It's horrible when it happens and so in some ways the all-inclusive prices were good, because I liked to know what I was going into. I always found negotiating prices in the room very difficult. I know some girls didn’t have a problem
with that and would go into the room and ask 'what do you want' before they would even
start with the massage, but that's not how I operate. I just can't go in there and start
talking money, I find that starting with a massage helps to break the ice and while I'm
doing it, I'm usually working out how long before I have to ask him if he wants
'something else' or checking out the best approach to ask. I don't mind talking to them
while I massage and that way I get to find out what they like, get them to relax, you know,
try to set up some rapport with them, like I would have done in the bar before we went
through, you know, you have to try and weigh up if they are going to want more, and, well
then you've got to try and make them want more. I'll usually ask, 'would you like
anything else tonight', in the hope that they're not going to go, 'ah no'. I much prefer if
everything is all prearranged before we go through, I just hate it, hate having to ask them,
it's just so demeaning I think, all that process.

It's funny the little games that go on in the room, like little power struggles, especially
when it comes to negotiating prices, you know, sometimes they'll go, '...hang on a minute
I need to see how much money I've got.' Then some might turn around and say that they
really want sex but they've only got $70 and so, well, it's basically your call, and then they
might turn around and give you $100 and want the change. That does happen, how rude!
But for me it's a point of honour I've agreed on it, on the price by then and so I have to
give them the change, though I'm thinking all the time, 'you cheap bastard'. Some clients
are just cheeky and they get away with it unfortunately, but then again it comes down to
you. Are you going to take $70, or you are going to risk ending up with nothing. That's
your choice and you have a split second to make it. And then you can get a guy who just
wants hand relief, I know its money, but that's not a very pleasant thing to do and
especially when you thought that it was going to be $100 job, and in the meantime, you
may miss out on some other clients who will pay $100 while you're with this one. I
always hate having to discuss money, hate it, as I said, that's the plus about all-inclusives
and about escorting, the fact that everything is all paid up front, all agreed on, no
quibbling about prices, like, like some will say 'oh but I only paid $60 with so and so'.

Now, you'd think that everyone working in a parlour would be pretty consistent with their
prices, ha! You'd think it'd be sensible for everyone to charge the same prices to avoid
that type of thing happening, you know, try to get the most for what you do. I know the
management expect you to be consistent. Well that just doesn't happen all the time, you've
got some girls saying that they would rather try to get the extra money and so will charge
a bit more if they can get away with it, and then there are some who will drop their price
just to get a job. You shouldn't have to drop you prices, but I don't think you should overcharge either, you'll just end up losing the client I think in the end. I know standard prices that you charge in the room haven't really changed that much over that past few year it's still $100 for sex or a full service, which usually includes a bit of hand relief and oral. Some girls will charge $70-80 in the room for just sex, but without the extras just to get the work and keep the clients, and then you get some who will drop their price a bit for their regulars, and, well I see nothing wrong with that, giving them a bit of discount as an incentive to come back.

When you think about it, there's a lot of competition out there, no wonder some people feel that they have to drop their prices. More and more girls are going out on their own like I have, and there's the escort agencies as well and I know that a lot of parlour owners don't like the thought of that. I mean, this whole thing about all-inclusive prices for a start all came out of the parlours trying to compete with the agencies. The parlours jumped on the bandwagon and began offering all-inclusives and trying to cost cut the agencies and escorts, and so prices dropped. The escort girls, they think if they charge less then they will get more people, but its got to be worth the work, I mean I know of girls who have to do 4 clients to make as much as some girls who only do 2. You've got to charge realistically for the work that you do otherwise I don't see the point in doing it. I mean it's not the greatest thing to do and so there has to be something going for it doesn't there?

There's nothing wrong with working in a parlour, but the thing with parlours is that they always want their cut and sometimes it might seem that they are getting too much when it's you who is doing the work. Like at Studio 14B, the all-inclusive rates were based on the time you were in the room: OK, so half an hour, 45 minutes or an hour, and the client had to pay for this at the door. So, for instance, he'd pay $110 for half an hour, and out of that the lady would get $75 and the business gets the rest. Now this incidentally works out to be the door fee for a half hour massage, exactly. You see, the business didn't lose out this way, which is what pissed most of the girls off, and yet, well as you know, we are expected to give the client a full service, a bit of oral, hand relief and then sex, as well as a massage all for $75. Now you think about that, we had to drop our prices by $25! And even if you want in for an hour you still only made $90, whereas for an hour you're usually looking at $100. To try and even things out a bit, some of the girls used to ask the client for a tip and explain that they make less money under this system and try and make the client feel cheap. I've just never had the nerve to ask for a tip, and I probably never got tipped for that reason.
Something that gets a lot of us angry, is the case of regulars who cotton onto the all-inclusives, like K and M. Now they had always paid the full price in the room and got the full service and then suddenly they clicked onto the all-inclusives, and why wouldn't they. So, it can be a bit annoying if somebody that you knew who had always in the past paid the full amount starts to switch over to the all-inclusives. However, there would be the odd exception, the odd client who thought that the all-inclusive system wasn't fair and would do things the old way, but unfortunately there's not many of them. I know that a lot of the girls get frustrated by all-inclusives and used to take out their frustrations out on the clients, by refusing to give 'the works' and just give them a massage, a very long one probably (laughs) and then just straight sex. I thought that as far as the client's concerned, he has paid $110 or whatever, and is not going to be worried what the cut is between the parlour and the lady, he's come in and paid for a service. This isn't his fault, most people like a bargain, and when you look at it, the all-inclusives are quite a bargain. But, some girls just refuse to give a full service unless the client gives them more money. That's when you start to get the management's back up, they don't like you asking for more money in the room because they're there selling this good deal at the door and the client then has to pay more! At Studio 14B they'd give you a couple of warnings and then out. You'd have to be pretty careful about it. That's the thing about parlours, news travels quickly.

A Professional Job

The second time around in the industry, I noticed that the women I worked with were friendlier and more open about talking about things. There was a sense of camaraderie at Studio 14B, and that's a thing that I had always liked about the place. I know from my experience at X and C, that dynamics can change in a place when people come and go, and generally at 14B we were supportive of each other at work, and people very much stuck around for a bit. I learned a lot more when I was there, you know, little things that can make a difference, different techniques to get the client off quickly, or how to try to stop condoms from getting ripped off by sneaky clients, now that's one everyone should know I can tell you! I learned to use condoms for oral and learned which ones to use. I had started off using the regular ones with spermicide; I remember that they tasted disgusting and made your mouth go numb (laughs), no one told me you didn't! Anyway, I didn't realise that there were nice flavoured ones for oral till someone told me. Another thing I learned was that some brands of lube would make the condoms perish, someone
told me that had happened, and I came across dental dams, you know, for the client doing oral on you, now that's, well that's something I'm not too keen on and I've found that when you produce one of these things it usually turns the client right off the idea.

A couple of the ladies were volunteers at the PC around the corner. There was always the odd pamphlet and copy of SIREN lying around. We were a few doors down from the PC and a couple of the ladies were volunteers there and so I suppose there was more talk about safe sex, like about being aware of your health and stuff at Studio 14B than at other places. Plus, F didn't mind about this, she liked the idea that we were informed about things like this, she especially liked the idea that her girls were looked at as being professional about the job, yeah, definitely more professional about condoms. If anybody thought that one of the girls was doing it without protection, it was considered the most disgusting thing. You know, we were very righteous about it all, and it was horror of horrors if anyone broke a condom, that's an awful thing to happen to someone.

I suppose that I became quite conscious about my body and health, like I'd have regular checks just about every month to four months at the free clinic at the PC. The risks are very scary, because that sort of thing is in your personal life too, and so you've got to take that little bit extra care. It's not very hard for a working girl to get a decent basic work kit together, some condoms, some lube, sponges, dental dams, a box of tissues, and that's about it really unless you are into using sex toys, simple really, and if you can't sort of get a basic kit organised then there's something wrong! You've got to take on responsibility for your health and I suppose the client's health too, because some of them need you to do it for them! There has to be some professionality about the way you work, the way you go about your work. I've always looked at it like a job where you had to be there on time and stay there, have your hours and have your stuff, be presented well and try to be professional. For me I felt bit more, I guess you could say, justified to have a certain amount of work ethic. Its my job, its what I do, my work, it's what I do and this is life.

It's all about having some standards I think, about what you do. There are things that you do and things that you don't do with clients. There are boundaries which you soon learn about. Like, take kissing for instance. Now a lot of clients, or rather a lot of people in general find it quite odd that you don't kiss. And I suppose it is a funny thing that we find kissing too personal, yet we'll have sex with this person and you can't get any more personal than that, but kissing is more personal because that's like your head and that's out of bounds. I mean, I see there being a difference between sex and intimacy and for me
kissing is an intimate thing. Some clients find it quite hard to understand. I mean I don't understand why they would want to kiss you anyway for a start. It's an intimate thing. It amazes me how persistent they can be about it too, and it can be quite a carry on, like the minute they get you in the room they are trying to kiss you. Some girls can be quite blunt and tell them to fuck off, but that's not my style. I try to be nice and pleasant about it and say no no no!! It's just ridiculous sometimes when they won't even take no for an answer and just keep trying. I'd say that most workers think that kissing their client is a big no and find it repulsive. It can interfere with the way you cope with the job, you know, control the situation, sort of changes it by being more intimate. With a lot of people, kissing is something for home, and it's a safety thing too, a hygiene thing. Having said this though, not I have known a couple of girls who will kiss with their clients, and like there's B's in town on X street which encourages you to break rules like kissing and expect the girls to give oral and let a client give it without using protection, they get right into sex shows where anything goes. I just basically think that you have to really like someone to kiss them.

Some of the girls tend to flit around between parlours, chasing the money, and you get some who will stay loyal to a parlour, sort of like their comfort zone. There are a lot of girls who are keeping a household and need to have a steady income from this work, and then there's others living in some scummy place with nothing to their name, not that I've got a hell of a lot for the years that I've worked but I should have some. You really do tend to waste a lot of the money that you make. You have to have a hard focus or goal not to, and even then the temptation is there to squander your earnings when you see other girls doing it. There's just a whole range of people working in this industry...and it can be quite difficult to get them motivated. Some people couldn't care less about what they look like, like the image that they are trying to project, and just walk around with their stockings down here and their tattoos and that, you know, the real tarty look, got no idea and don't put in much effort, turn up late, don't have their work kit, rude to the clients and not particularly hygienic. There are just different attitudes, some people have a different outlook on the job, some people see it as a job, a profession of sorts and for others it's just a way of making a quick buck, and I think that they're the ones that give it a bad name, you know, live up to the stereotype of hooker.

But then again, at one stage I got quite depressed when I was working at Studio 14B, and I just didn't turn up for a couple of shifts, didn't bother to call or anything. That's not really good work ethic, but I was so down I didn't want to talk to anyone and I certainly
couldn't face ringing up work and saying I wasn't coming in, and so the easiest thing was to not show up! So, I do realise how hard this job can be sometimes to cope with, you know sometimes you just can't leave it all at work, there's so much attached to it that gets to you personally. I never got fined or anything for not showing up. I think they knew that there were things going on with me, and that I was reliable and if I wasn't there then there must be something wrong. If you're a reliable worker and you're late or can't come in one night then you will get more lee way.

I hate to admit it, but you do get cynical and I never really wanted to get too hard with this job, but you can't really help it and it does make it a lot harder to trust men or respect them. Men just seem so unintelligent about this whole sex deal. They seem to have the urge to have sex like we have the urge to go to the toilet. I will always remember this story that a friend told me when she worked in the busy parlour days, that this guy came into the parlour and went straight through to the room with her, didn't want a massage, just wanted to get straight down to it. And afterwards she asked him if he wanted a cup of coffee, 'no he didn't' as it turned out that he had double parked outside!! Can you believe it, he'd run in and done it.

I think it's funny how clients lose all grasp on reality and live the fantasy, you know, like the way that a client assumes that you're enjoying it, even though he's had to pay you to do it with him. It might be some old fat smelly man and you might be masturbating him or something and he will say, 'oh you really like that don't you?' Well what on earth would you be getting out of that for a start! (laughs). And, the thing about using lube is that a lot of the men think that it's natural wetness, yeah, some of them know that you use lubrication, but will still say 'you like that don't you'. They believe that they have turned you on. I often wonder if there is a man in the world that is faithful. I mean, some clients even talk about their partners in the room with you.

Clients can vary in, well some are better than others in their attitude towards you, and then you do tend to get the, 'you're too good for this' lines, and you know they say it to every girl. For the first few months when I first started working, I'd believe every guy, 'wow this guy thinks that I'm so great', but you soon learn that its just one of their lines, you see we're not the only ones that come out with lines, the clients do it too! I do remember a conversation I had with one man after we'd been through to the room. He had been a total pig in the room for a start, and we were sitting having a drink in the reception area afterwards, which was the policy of the business, otherwise I wouldn't
have been anywhere near him, you see, you had to sit and have a coffee or a drink with your client until they were ready to leave or until you were requested. Anyway, I didn't really want to be with him, it was the last thing I felt like doing, sit and have a conversation with a guy who has just been a complete arsehole in the room! Anyway, so here we are, and he was giving me a lecture about how I was 'bastardising' my body and how could I do this, and that my life will never be the same. I thought, 'hang on, we're both here and you are spending money, you're paying for it, and I'm making it so how is it that I'm bastardising my body?' No matter how much you argue with blokes like that, they just don't get it, you know, when they ask, 'how could you do it?' they fail to see that they're the ones paying for it, creating the demand. It's funny how a lot of them are pretty disdainful of it all and yet they don't see that they are doing anything wrong by being there and paying for it, although, it only really tends to be disdainful afterwards, till after the deed!

Everyone's got their collection of working stories to tell. You try to forget the horrible stuff, and actually the funny stories can help to keep you sane to a certain extent. Most working women will agree that having someone to talk to about work makes the whole job easier, you can accept some of the shit you hear, or experience, because you know that someone else is doing or someone else has experienced the same thing and so it's not just you. If you have had a bad situation in the room, like it might have been something little or something big that they've done or said, something insulting, or say he couldn't get it up and he spent most of his time grizzling at you saying 'you're not doing it right', or complains about how much it all cost. Then if you walk out into the lounge afterwards and there you've got your friends and work mates who'll probably help you have a laugh about it, and then it's gone, you let go of it. Although there have been a couple of occasions when I had a nasty client at the end of the night, right at the end, and I didn't have the chance to talk to someone about it, and I just lay in bed at home and thought and thought about it all night, going round my head. I'm lucky that I still work with other people, it's important that you can laugh about and compare work experiences, it makes you feel better about yourself, especially if it's something that the guy has said, if he's insulted you. But then again, you do come across some women in parlours that are loners and will keep to themselves, they don't need that release among other women and often find another way of coping with the job, or so it seems.
When I decided to go escorting it was sort of as a result of being sick of the way things began to change at Studio 14B, a change of management. The owner’s ex-husband took over and began to treat the place like his own personal harem. He’d let guys in to sit and drink and play pool all night and expected us to entertain them. So that, and all these new girls were coming and going, and I guess I felt that I’d have enough of hooking and it was time to move on. I wanted to go to Polytech and try and get back into straight work by doing some courses. So I left, and saw escorting as a way to finance this. I thought it would give me more flexibility and so I could work on my terms, when I wanted to. So, I rented a nice apartment with two other ladies, one’s a close friend of mine. I feel quite secure about this set up, well put it this way, I’ve never had a problem. Yeah, I know there’s a first time for things, but I think that the men who come here, don’t actually know what the situation is. They don’t know for sure if there’s a guy in the room next door or anything, and like I said, I’ve never had any even slight problems.

Anyway, I get to work my own hours and there is no one telling me what to do. I used to find it quite stressful to have to get to work at a certain time and stay on the shift until the end. I used to really hate that, especially when it was really quiet, and certainly some of the receptionists used to drag out the shift for their own pay since they were paid per hour. Escorting is more private you only see that one guy so you are not in the parlour with every other man that comes in to see other girls seeing you there too. And another thing is that I don’t have to hand over ‘shift fees’ and any other fees that the parlours liked to dream up, you know, linen and towels for each client and whatever. Studio 14B used to charge us one fee, $15 and that was for the laundry and coffee and tea stuff. Well, I didn’t like that idea of a one lump fee, what happened if you didn’t drink coffee like me, or what about if you didn’t get any work or only had one job for the shift, you still had to pay the damn shift fee at the end. If you didn’t hand over your fee at the end of the shift, then the receptionist would take it out of any of your credit card or all-inclusive money or it would go, she would write it down in the book for next time. I much prefer the freedom and flexibility of working for myself. I don’t think I could ever go back to a parlour, no, never.

I guess you could say that I work what you would call part-time and I can be pretty slack on that somedays. I never work before mid day, but on the other hand I do like to get work over with by 7.00pm. So, on the days that I make myself available I will work between midday and 7, maybe later if they’ve booked in advance. I advertise in the
Christchurch Press and use a cellphone number for contact. I know girls that use land lines get more work, I can understand that, I mean, I don’t like phoning cellphones myself much. But on the other hand, I think that the guys that actually ring a cellphone can be more genuine, well, they can afford to for a start and that’s good, he’s not interested in the cheaper options. Anyway, it’s my choice to use a cellphone, and I find that it works well for me.

Mind you, answering the phone is something that I hate doing and glad to say that it was something I never had to do when I worked in a parlour. Sometimes it can be, not necessarily stressful, but more annoying, you might have 10 clowns in a row that have no intention of booking, but you still have to go through the routine, what you look like what your rates are and so on. I always try to be pretty honest on the phone, I don’t say that I’m skinny, I give them the truth. I know some girls who stretch the truth somewhat on the phone, but I’d rather not lie and have them turn up and you are totally different. No, I much prefer to be honest, to be straight with them.

I don’t put the price in the paper, I prefer to do that on the phone, which is what most people do anyway. If you are saying that its so and so for half an hour and so and so for an hour, then you’re not technically soliciting, you can basically get away with it, because what you are advertising is your time. However, you’re not allowed to advertise as an in-call or out-call service. But there’s ways of getting around it. For a start, generally it’s taken for granted that most girls do in-calls, I learned that the hard way when I didn’t have a place at first. It’s funny, but when I first decided to do escorting I had this idea that I’d just do it part-time and I imagined that most of it would be out-calls, like going out to the Parkroyal and visiting clients at hotels and that. So I didn’t think about setting myself up with an apartment. So, at first, I used to have to stress that this was an ‘out-call’ service otherwise I would go through the whole deal, what I looked like and how much I charged, and what you do and don’t do and whatever, and then they’d ask ‘and where do I come to?”. There just wasn’t the demand for out-calls.

I’ve found that on the phone, as a rule, if clients start asking questions they won’t book in. Like if they start talking nonsense about are you shaved, do you do anal, are you wearing lingerie, have you any tattoos etc. these guys never seem to book. That’s why it can get quite stressful and annoying. Answering the phone is part of the work, it’s got to be done and even though you’re are not getting paid, you can spend a good deal of your day doing it, I mean you just wouldn’t get work otherwise. I thought that I would have got a lot
more work initially, when I first started, but then I guess it's about building up a regular clientele rather than relying on off the street 'one-offs', like the parlours get, though you do get the equivalent. That suits me really, developing a regular clientele. My friend and I aren't 'over-priced', I mean we are a lot cheaper than a parlour. I charge $70 for half an hour and $100 for an hour. When I first started I used to charge $80 for half an hour and $120 for the hour but I found that you just have to meet the market to a certain extent. There are women that charge as little as $30-40, you see them in the paper, and you get the clients who want to barter, if a client phones and tries to barter with me, then I'll just say no, no. I'm always polite to them and I'll tell them to look in the paper and find something cheaper if they like. I certainly wouldn't be able to justify doing it for $30-40 or even 50 and that's what some girls are doing. There's quite a big discrepancy in prices of some ladies. I know people that charge $100 for half an hour and $150 for the hour, so what I charge is around about medium, there are people dearer and there are certainly people cheaper. It's funny but I find that the clients who generally only barter on the phone, and as I've said, if they start to barter with you they are probably not going to even come. They're the ones, they tend to ring around doing the same thing. Generally, clients go with the price discussed on the phone. I've never had anyone come along and try to barter and go back on the agreed price, whereas clients in the parlour tried to negotiate a better deal in the room even after you had agreed on a price in the lounge.

Anyway, I'm quite happy to just go with my regulars anyway, you don't get any surprises, and I feel more secure about clients coming here because they come into my deal, it's like it's my territory and I start off with that edge. But I do find that I get nervous every time when I get a new client. I think that when I open the door, he might not like me, you know you look at their faces to see if you're what they had in mind. That's the difficulty of escorting, it all goes on phone descriptions, like you have to sell yourself over the phone before they will see you. I had this embarrassing incident once. The client had arrived early and I had just arrived at the apartment minutes before him. Normally I try to get there early so I can check the place is ok and do some final touches. I was sort of rushing a bit when he arrived and I was chatting away, I was nervous and probably chatting too much, then he asked me something stupid like are you shaved and then he said 'I might just leave it'. It was the first time that has ever happened. When he'd gone, I looked at myself in the mirror and I didn't think I looked bad or worse than any other day. I didn't want to tell anyone about it, I was too embarrassed. I thought well you can't be everyone's cup of tea, but it really shook the old confidence. So, now I worry about that happening every time I get a new client coming around.
I'm also nervous in the room, always have been, but you try not to show it and so I always like to start with a massage and silly as it sound, I think that comes across that you are in control, you know, that, well, you're giving the massage and you tell them to get undressed and showered, when to roll over and so on. I don't even like being with a man who says 'don't worry about the massage', I don't know, I'm just too conservative I guess the way I go about it, but, I can't just get down to it. I need to be a bit relaxed myself for a minute two. It just seems silly to whip off your clothes and do it. At least a massage gives you the excuse to have your clothes off and get close and then you can go at it. I think that it's a nice way to start, I know the clients still like it and some will even ask you to give a massage first. I know I've always been fairly conservative in the services I offer, like, just the usual straight sex, on top, missionary, doggie style but only with regular clients because it's really easy for a client to rip off a condom in that position. I'll do oral and hand relief, body slides and 'tit fucks' although I'd rather not. And if they ask, I'll let them go down on me but only with a dental damn. But I won't do anal, fetish/fantasy or any of that B&D stuff, sticking fingers up their bottoms or using sex toys on them and me, or any urinating or shitting on them, ugh! It's OK if that's what you want to do, but I couldn't do it. You can get them asking for a lot of weird stuff. I suggest to them to go elsewhere and look in the paper.

Anyway, I also feel awkward about asking for the money, I've always hated having to do it, and so I don't ask for the money first and I never have, I'd rather they just put it on the table or whatever. I remember something that I heard years ago when I first started working, was that, that if you don't actually take the money and the client turns out to be a cop then you can't be done. Anyway, I hate dealing with the money part of the job, and as I said, I always like them to just put it down. I really hate the ones that count it out in front of you, I mean I find it quite humiliating. I try to make it a pleasant experience for them and I expect the same in return. I do remember that I had a couple of problems at Studio 14B with payments and so I made clients pay first but after a while then I slotted back into getting the money after. I guess it's easier that a lot of my clients tend to be regulars and so you can be a bit more relaxed about it, and so I'm only wary with the new ones.
**Mobile Escorting: going 'out of town'**

My friend and I will also work out of town, out of a motel room. We advertise in the local paper the day before we head out there. We just do some of the South Island towns. We've got to know particular areas quite well and have some regulars there and can guarantee that we will have at least two jobs each, each day, but will generally get more than that. I've heard this term, which I don't like that much, that we are chasing work. I don't look at it that way, it's nice to work out of Christchurch and it can be busier and so pay quite well even after we've paid our motel and petrol and whatever, and we still come out a lot better doing our out of town jaunt than just staying in Christchurch.

I mean, we do enjoy it, it's almost like a wee holiday for us. We tend to go to 'Smalltown' all the time now, and so nice just to leave the city limits. Most of the people that we have met there have been quite nice too. There's quite often other girls there and they all stay in the same motel complex and its like a, like a holiday camp (laughs). There's not a problem and we've got to know some of the other girls and if somebody new appears, we'll ring them up and ask them if they want to come around for a drink and meet us, you know, create a good working environment. I guess when there's plenty work to go around girls are more likely to want to be more sociable, and also, in that sort of situation no-one really wants to say that they've been quiet so, funny but, you tend to exaggerate it rather than go the other way.

**Registration**

One of the most unpleasant things about going out on your own for me personally, was to register with the police as a private escort, even though the police I dealt with were fairly respectful, there were others that were standing around sort of girl sniffing or whatever. The whole process is that they take your real name, date of birth, address and your working name and telephone number that you're going to use in the ad. Then they take your photo, I mean, they don't ask you how tall you are or for any identifying features. I wasn't too keen on having my photo taken, it made me feel like I was a criminal. The police say that they need photos for safety reasons so they know who is working, and because it is a high risk job, bla bla bla. I don't believe that at all, it's just more about control. Registration is not law, they can't actually make you do it, but you have to if you want to advertise. You can't advertise if you don't do it, which sucks, I don't see why, what the Press has to do with this, but there's this agreement between the Press and the Christchurch Police, the Press won't accept your ad unless you are registered with the
police. If I knew I could count on just regulars then I wouldn't have bothered with registering, but when I first started out I didn't, I didn't tell any of the regulars I had at the parlour that I was going to start escorting but I can't imagine anyone being in that position not having to advertise in the Press, not in Christchurch, so you have to get registered. What I'd like to know is what happens if you stop working, will you be taken off the register. I've heard that it stays there for good, you know once a prostitute, always.

Ugh and then you go to place your ad at the Press office, who ever is on the desk at the time has to go away and look up to see if you're registered, they keep you in a file, you see. You can be standing there in the office and see other people getting their police check too, the whole procedure is not overly discreet, and you have to pay in cash every time, and you have to go in there every time you want to place an ad, or if you want to change your number then it's back to the police for that. And the Press are really funny about what we can put and what we can't. You can't describe yourself at all, it's quite restrictive in terms of what you can say in your ad. I'll generally have something like 'upmarket executive service', you always have to have service after it, and you can't physically describe yourself like, tall and blonde or busty and brunette, nothing like that. If you ever glance at a paper, you'll probably wonder why they all sound so staid, or lack imagination, but every now and again someone will get away with voluptuous.

When I worked in a parlour, the management used to place the ads for the ladies, but these ads weren't physical descriptions but tended to describe the personalities or the services offered, within reason of course, like, friendly, fun, exotic. I once tried to put something in about 'having a good time' and the press wouldn't allow it. Anyway, I think the men who read them have got the picture generally. In some other papers you can be a bit more explicit, in the south you can. When my friend and I travel out of town we describe ourselves as a busty brunette and I think I'm supposed to be a leggy blonde or something, these are the types of silly things that you have to put, and we can get away with it.

**Getting Out**

Most of my family and friends know what I do, and when I look back, it happened probably fairly easily. They all had had their ideas and suspicions of what I was up to, I guess. But what I found is one of the difficulties of trying to be honest with friends and
family is getting past those stereotypes of prostitutes that everyone thinks of, you know, the fishnet stockings and the tattoos, the drug addicts, oh yeah and the bikie boyfriend, and, and all the kids with different fathers. Unfortunately that stereotype is out there still, even though I used to tell people a load of times that it's wrong. But, however, I hate to say it, but the more that I've worked the more that I've met it. I guess it's like any industry or job, there's good and bad people in it, you know, people who want to work and those who just get into the lifestyle of it all. There's definitely more, probably more draw backs to the job than there are positive sides, well that's for me personally. At the moment the biggest draw back for me is that I've probably stayed in it, in the industry too long, and I think that now I'm almost unemployable in the straight world. It's pretty hard to explain or justify what I've been doing for the last five years. I mean, I can't see many employers going to be acceptable of what I've been doing and then there's only so many lies you can tell. Imagine if the man who is going to interview you, was once a client.

Discipline, Ambiguity and Autonomy

Claudia's story is an account of sex work. Her account of work provides an opening up of the organisation and practices of different massage parlour and private escort sex markets. She focuses upon the multiple activities in the performance and sale of sexual services, the politics involved in the regulation of sex markets, in addition to the discursive and material positioning of Claudia herself.

More conventional understandings about sex work have focused on the conventions of narratives/stories, and sex worker/client dyads, to explore the identity politics of sex work, particularly how sex workers construct and manage their identities to render meaning to what they do. The issue of control/power has traditionally been viewed in terms of the sex worker/client encounter or within the relationship between the sex worker and the state. Claudia's account however, draws our attention to the process of sex work and tensions over the different meanings/understandings of the actors and groups of actors involved with the sex work industry. For Claudia then, the massage parlour is a site of struggle between sex workers and management over notions of work and professionalism.

The sex work industry in New Zealand is composed of a number of different sex markets. This thesis will consider the massage parlour, the private escort market, and the phone sex market, and the female sex workers who operate within them. The massage parlour, for example, is a peculiar institution, that is organised through a specific piece of legislation
(the Massage Parlours Act 1978). The legislation specifically states that the act of prostitution is not permitted to take place on the premises¹. Therefore, within this arrangement, massage parlour management and workers must look towards a form of organisation that allows for the provision of commercial sexual services despite legislative prohibitions. This raises the issue of work relations and processes undertaken in such a business. How does an 'employer' construct work rules and enforce their implementation, as well as negotiate conflicting objectives with workers who are essentially performing/providing a service that cannot be formally recognised?

The play on ambiguity that characterises the organisation of sex work in the massage parlour is particularly important in securing operational styles for both the private escort and phone sex markets. These ambiguities facilitate local informal arrangements with the police, private business sector, and the daily newspapers to allow for workers in these markets to operate 'discreetly'. For the private escort, the organisation of their work and the construction of their 'professional' work identity is tied up in their ability to avoid disclosure.

This thesis is both innovative and exploratory. I seek to traverse traditional areas of prostitution literature and knowledge. I propose that through the application of insights drawn from accounts of more conventional forms of work, in addition to my own experience as worker/researcher in the industry, accounts from sex workers, police, community groups, New Zealand Prostitutes' Collective (NZPC), and support personnel, we turn our attention to the formal and informal arrangements through which diverse actors are actively connected to facilitate particular types of sex work markets and modes of operation. I will suggest in the thesis that this is achieved by both managers and sex workers 'trading' on ambiguity.

¹ Massage Parlours Act 1978 section 30-31
In Claudia's version prostitution is work. By contrast, work was generally ignored in favour of moral condemnations that positioned the prostitute as either 'victim' or 'successful whore' in the literature on prostitution. For example, prostitution has been addressed in a large body of literature concerned with the deviant and criminal behaviour of women\(^1\) (see Bishop, 1931; Davis, 1961; Edwards, 1981; Hassard, 2000; Hutter & Williams, 1981; Little, 1989; Lombroso & Ferrero, 1895; Scutt, 1990; Smart, 1976; Smart & Smart, 1978; Velarde, 1975). Similarly, the early stages of feminist analysis presented prostitution in terms of a deviant activity or as sexual slavery (Barry, 1979; Dworkin, 1987; Høigard & Finstad, 1992). However, prostitution literature over the last 15 years has challenged representations such as the exploited/victimised prostitute, or the prostitute as the manifestation and result of men's control over women's sexuality (see Barry, 1979; Dworkin, 1987; Erbe, 1984), or the prostitute as pathologically deviant (see Glueck & Glueck, 1934; Konopka, 1966; Thomas, 1969). A significant feature of this 'new' literature is the incorporation of the sex worker's 'voice'. In this new literature are found echoes of the discourses drawn upon by Claudia in her story.

This change in the approach of prostitution research can be seen in McLeod's 1982 study in which she attempts to present prostitutes as 'ordinary' women. Through the use of the voices of sex workers and their clients in her text, McLeod presents prostitutes as poor women struggling to overcome the constraints placed upon them in a 'capitalist society'. She documents the difficulties that they encounter in order to secure an income, but what is

\(^{1}\) Furthermore, attempts to explain prostitution have often sought to identify pathological features in the backgrounds of sex workers as a reason for their involvement in prostitution (see Glueck & Glueck, 1934;
innovative about her study is the proposition that prostitution is like any other form of women's work. In this way, McLeod displaces the construction of prostitution as an abnormal activity and replaces it with the construction of prostitutes as workers. However, her assumption that prostitution is the same as all other economic activities in which women engage deploys a somewhat unitary and common sense conception of work as any form of paid labour. This limits her analysis to recognising only the dissimilar effects that involvement in prostitution has on sex workers in comparison with 'legitimate' workers, and thereby closes the analysis to questions about differences between the practices, activities and relationships of prostitution and ordinary, everyday work. However, by presenting prostitution as a form of paid labour, McLeod lays the groundwork for an economic analysis of women's involvement in sex work, the organisation of sex work, and the exploration of the culturally and historically specific economic conditions for continued involvement in prostitution.

Recent feminist literature (see Brewis & Linstead, 2000a; 2000b; 2000c; Brock, 1998; Chapkis, 2000; Day, 1990, 1996; McKeeganey & Barnard, 1996; O'Connell Davidson, 1995; Phoenix, 1999; Scambler, 1997; Skilbrei, 2001) has further developed the approach of reframing prostitution as work to explore, the multiple activities involved in performing sex work, the politics involved in regulating sex markets, the discursive and material positioning of sex workers, the mobilisation of sexuality discourses, and the health and safety of sex workers. This literature is linked to the prostitutes' rights and grassroots organisations which have been an important development over the last two decades, helping to shift prostitution discourse from sin, sex and crime, and place it within discourses about work, choice and civil rights. The issue of control/power within the prostitute/client transaction in particular has been prominent in 'new' prostitution research. Unlike McLeod, who focuses on poverty, this literature focuses upon the ways in which individual prostitutes discursively position themselves in relation to their activities and their relationships with clients. In this way, the debate on sex work has been shifted from economic opportunities to a form of identity politics and a concern with how sex workers attempt to construct and manage their identities and render meaning in what they do.²

² Konopka, 1966; Thomas, 1969), but since such features can be common to many non-sex workers, such explanations have limited value.

² Though O'Connell Davidson's work is centred in an economic position, identity tends to be tied up in accounts of exploitation,
A different literature involves the use of the prostitute voice, as in my use of Claudia's story. This genre of feminist literature has provided a space for sex workers to write about their lives and, thereby, gain an insight into the lived experiences of sex workers (see Chapkis, 1996; Delacoste & Alexander, 1987; Jordan, 1991; McLeod, 1982; Nagle, 1997; Perkins & Bennet, 1985; Pheterson, 1989). Prostitutes' own accounts of their lives and their work introduce ideas, concepts and visions that illuminate the complexities of sex workers' experiences and work. Common themes in such narrative accounts tend to point to the earning capacity of workers as paramount for involvement in prostitution, in addition to the work being constructed as a necessary and inevitable feature of society (Delacoste & Alexander, 1987; Nagle, 1997). This literature, mostly by feminists working in the sex work industry and their supporters, insists that for many women prostitution is freely chosen service work. It argues that women and men working in the sex work industry deserve the same human rights and civil liberties as other workers. Nagle, for example, critiques the paradoxical vision of mainstream feminism, which she claims is often intent on analysing how sex work oppresses women and, at the same time, ignores the marginal voices of sex workers themselves that may contradict this perspective (1997).

In contrast, Nagle presents the struggles by current and former sex workers to integrate their feminist views with their sex practice, and attempts to distinguish between freely chosen voluntary sex work and coerced, involuntary sex work, through the inclusion of accounts from prostitute activists. The narratives from women who 'choose' to work as prostitutes provide us with complex accounts of sexuality, identities and lived experiences of women traversing the spaces between 'good girls' and 'bad girls', between gender conformity and sexual identity. Empowerment and control are central themes in these accounts. Dudash, for example, argues that working in the sex industry can be empowering for women in that they acquire a sense of being in control of their own bodies and are thus able to deal more effectively with the harassment associated with sex work (1997: 116). Similarly, Chapkis in *Live Sex Acts: Women Performing Erotic Labour*, argues in favour of commercial sex being defined as 'erotic labour' (1996).

The narratives in Chapkis' book come from a variety of settings and occupations, such as call girls and escort workers, women in pornography, brothel workers, street workers, peep show workers and phone sex workers both in the U.S. and Amsterdam. In addition, there are narratives from activists working to help women's condition in and out of the industry. In this way, Chapkis attempts to highlight the diversity and complex nature of the sex industry (1996). Though Chapkis refers to the women as sex workers, not all of the
women willingly entered prostitution, as the content of the interviews illustrates the notion that women's experiences in the sex industry vary, overlap, and are complex. Similarly, Jordan describes the narratives of New Zealand prostitutes as 'stories of survival', and claims that they contribute to the process of making women's lives more visible and, thereby, help to challenge popular images of prostitution and prostitutes. In Jordan's account these women document their experiences as strategies to survive financially, overcome effects of abuse and violence and exert control over their bodies (Jordan, 1991).

The use of narrative accounts from women working in the industry adds to our knowledge of sex work. Through narrative accounts, prostitutes' attitudes towards their work shows up in the words that they use to talk about what they do. Like Claudia, they often refer to themselves as workers, working girls, or business women, while their work is referred to as the job, a business, and the time outside their work is referred to as 'time off' (Brewis & Linstead, 2000a; Day, 1990; McKeegan & Barnard, 1996; Perkins & Bennett, 1985). However, the way in which the voices/narratives are introduced or located within a text is important. Though literature that relies upon the voices of sex workers provides a useful understanding of the complex lived relations of women who work in the sex industry as prostitutes, dancers, and strippers, it does not examine or acknowledge how these lives are ordered through the particular socio-cultural and economic forms through which the sex work industry is organised (see Delacoste & Alexander, 1987; Jordan, 1991; Nagle, 1997). The sex industry is presented as a given, an unproblematic set of working arrangements that exists. Without the mediating voice of an author/editor, the accounts and dialogues do not move beyond the descriptive and experiential.

**Managing Identity: making sense of sex work**

A central theme in the many accounts of sex workers in contemporary literature is the crafting/construction of a sex worker identity through which sex workers rationalise, manage and sustain their involvement in prostitution. In Phoenix' study, for example, women make sense of their engagement in prostitution through the use of discursive strategies that account for the relationships they have with pimps, ponces, partners, punters and the police, and of the material, social and ideological conditions they inhabit (1999: 185). For Phoenix, the practice of sex work impels workers to separate and commodify their own sexuality in order to be the embodiment of the client's fantasy ideal. In her account, a fundamental problem of this process for the sex worker has been how to adjust their self to this work identity or fantasy ideal in such a way that would be least stressful
and less likely to consume their own sense of self. Phoenix argues that the contradiction
of involvement in prostitution for the women in her study - the paradox of their
explanations - is accommodated with the construction of a very distinct identity, a prostitute

Phoenix' arguments are found in the more general literature on service workers. Such
workers are represented as having to manage the estrangement of feelings for commercial
use and to cope with the threat of alienation that accompanies the sale of the self. Hochschild (1979; 1983) writes of airline hostesses in this way. Their relation to their
work incorporates varied stances revolving around the distinction between the worker's
sense of self and working identity. According to Hochschild,

"[t]he essential problem is how to adjust one's self to the role in a way
that allows some flow of self into the role but minimises the stress the role
puts on the self"
(Hochschild, 1983: 188).

What Hochschild suggests is that workers perform 'deep acting' (1979) extending
Goffman's concept of impression management beyond individuals (actors) merely
managing outer impressions without actively engaging in the management of inner feelings
(1990). This is "an acting that goes well beyond the mere ordering of display", undertaken
by individuals whose job it is to make and sustain meanings (Hochschild, 1979: 563). She
suggests that service workers make the commodification of feelings more palatable through
the 'reliable production of good feelings' (1979: 563). This accommodation offsets
interference with efficiency and quality of work and reduces stress on the worker (Leidner,
1993).

Brewis & Linstead extend this argument with the claim that work and occupations in which
the worker's body (or parts of it), actually constitute the service on offer, can often threaten
to 'consume' them or pose a threat to the self-identity of the sex worker (2000a: 209). As
self-employed service workers, sex workers must also undertake a form of emotional
labour that enables the commodification of feelings as well as bodies. But they must also
be able to negotiate the stigma that surrounds the selling of sexual services. O'Connell
Davidson (1994) comments that:
Making a living as a self-employed prostitute entails dealing not just with problems that beset all self-employed people, but also negotiating obstacles and difficulties stemming from the nature of the business itself and the legal and ideological framework within which commercialised sexual transactions take place.

(O'Connell Davidson, 1994: 3)

O'Connell Davidson further argues that:

A complex set of pre-capitalist and non-market ideology generally governs the sexual interaction of individuals, such as honour, shame, love, pleasure and loyalty and particular meanings are attached to sexuality that tend to underpin the codes and conventions governing sexual interaction.

(O'Connell Davidson, 1996: 193)

Thus, in this way, O'Connell Davidson suggests that how we 'do sex' can determine who we are and, importantly, determine a sense of ourselves. For example, Pheterson argues that a woman becomes a prostitute not only during the hours that she works, but by the nature of her work she becomes a prostitute, a stigmatised category of woman (1990). Thus, the relevance of Phoenix' claim, that for sex workers it is important to establish definitions of the sex act in order that they may achieve some separation between their 'work self' and their 'personal self' (1999).

Similarly, Brewis and Linstead argue that sex work, by its very nature, potentially exerts pressure on the relationship between personal and professional identities, leaving the worker to struggle with establishing and maintaining a separation between the two (2000a). Furthermore, they suggest that it is the way in which these pressures are handled and experienced which shed a light on the complexity of sex work (2000b). For example, the categorisation of different types of sexual encounter, such as work, recreational, and loving/relational are considered important for distancing from the emotional demands of the client encounter and to enable the maintenance of self-identity beneath the public, professional mask. However, Brewis and Linstead state that the boundaries between categories have the potential to be blurred, and can require constant attention and work (2000a: 206).
The management of identity in sex work, then, often points to the need of the worker to maintain boundaries between their commercial and non-commercial lives. Sex workers attempt this through a diverse range of strategies/techniques as means to strengthen their own positions. Drug use for instance, often synonymous with prostitution, has been cited as a means to make the work more bearable (see Brewis & Linstead, 2000b; McKeganey & Barnard, 1996; Perkins, 1991; Plant, 1990). Soft drugs, such as nicotine, alcohol, marijuana, caffeine, amphetamines, and valium, are documented as being widely used by sex workers to help them relax, stay awake, pass time, and/or dull the unpleasantness of the job. However, Perkins comments that drug use is often influenced by the commercial sex venue or work location. For example, brothels are more likely to monitor drug use and expect workers to be able to engage in conversation with clients and provide a more 'professional' service (1991). Pyett and Warr suggest that experienced workers learn to develop specific work routines/practice and thereby enjoy a greater autonomy over their work. However, this autonomy is limited to the use of soft drugs to establish the psychological context for the sex work encounter (1999).

The women in Day's study claim to minimise the physical contact within the commercial sex act through the use of condoms (Day, 1990). Similarly, the workers in Woods' (1996) study claimed that practising vaginal, anal or oral sex with a client without a condom was seen to be too intimate and should be reserved only for the privacy of an intimate/personal relationship outside work (see also Day, 1990; Day & Ward, 1990; Edwards, 1993; Harcourt & Philpot, 1990; McKeganey & Barnard, 1996; Perkins, 1991; Pyett & Warr, 1999a, 1999b). Furthermore, he suggests that condom use was an integral part of sex work, perceived as the norm or 'unwritten rule' within the parlour context (Woods, 1996: 130). Sex workers also claim to restrict access to areas of the body and will not engage in certain sexual practices or activities. Desiree in O'Connell Davidson's study developed a code relating to which areas of her body she is prepared to allow clients access to, and which acts she is willing to perform (1995; 1994). Kissing, for example is considered by a majority of sex workers to be too much of an intimate activity (see also Edwards, 1993; McKeganey & Barnard, 1996; Perkins & Bennet, 1985; Pyett & Warr, 1999a; Scambler, 1997). For Desiree, kissing is representative of genuine desire and love for the other person and therefore has no place in commercial sexual transactions (1995: 6). Scambler comments that while sex workers often cite hygiene and condom-use as a means for setting out boundaries, sex workers also have a pre-defined 'work code' or 'code of practice' that proscribes certain sexual acts to be outside the categories of work activities and services (1997: 115). Furthermore, Desiree is careful not to allow personal taste or preference to
interfere with her selection of clients. Thus, her acceptance of any kind of client as long as they agree to play by her rules, enables her to maintain a distinction between work and non-work sexual encounters (1995: 9).

Sex workers also employ a range of discursive strategies in which to locate themselves, such as, for example, commodified bodies, workers, business women, victims or survivors (see Brewis & Linstead, 2000a; Day, 1990; McKeganey & Barnard, 1996; O'Connell Davidson, 1995; O'Neill, 2001; Phoenix, 1999). In this way:

\[
\text{[t]he anomalies and contradictions of their lives are resolved and rendered coherent in a fashion that permits such involvement to be 'plausible'.}
\]

(Phoenix, 2000: 3)

The sex workers in Day's study, for example, consider themselves first and foremost as businesswomen who make a living through what they class as entrepreneurial activity, "gleaning their income through business acumen and not through wage labour" (1996: 77). These women comment on their ability to do business without the restrictions of fixed work hours, managerial interference and state inspection, offering what they consider to be 'professional skills' in, for example, therapy, entertainment, health and, of course, sex (see also Brewis & Linstead, 2000a; Kempadoo & Doezema, 1999; Phoenix, 1999; Truong, 1990). The focus on self-determination and autonomy by the London sex workers in Day's study provides the women with a positive role and ability to rationalise their participation in sex work (1996: 76). Similarly, McKeganey and Barnard found that, for the most part, prostitutes attempt to regard clients in an impersonal way. They do this by perceiving and talking about what they do in terms of work (1996).

The intimate nature of sex work can exert enormous pressure upon the sex worker in terms of emotional labour to manage her emotions and those of the client. Hochschild argues that the commercialisation of feelings, performance, emotions, and bodies has the potential to threaten the real self of the worker through the act of inauthenticity, through the sale of the self (1983). In this way, workers have commented that they can experience estrangement from their 'selves' (see Høigard & Finstad, 1992; McKeganey & Barnard, 1996; O'Neill, 2001). However, Chapkis (1996) argues that the ability to summon and contain emotion within the client transaction can also be experienced by sex workers as a useful tool in boundary maintenance, rather than as a loss of self (see Høigard & Finstad,
1992). Cheyenne, for example, comments that she sees no difference in the way that she attempts to divorce herself from her feelings than the way that fire fighters and doctors do (Cheyenne cited in Chapkis, 1996: 79). Chapkis further argues that it is possible to rethink the assumption that sex work inevitably destroys the emotional life of the worker, and instead, look at the sex worker as being actively engaged in professionally distancing themselves through emotional labour as other service workers do (1996: 78-79).

The implications of these service work arguments are spelt out by Brewis and Linstead when they argue that workers are able to establish and maintain separation between work sex and relational or recreational sex by viewing the buying and selling of sexual services as a market exchange (2000a). This argument is promoted both by certain sectors of the industry and sex work support groups and is referred to as the 'sex worker argument' (Phoenix, 1999). Prostitutes are presented or represent themselves as service workers who happen to sell their sexuality as opposed to other dimensions of their labour power (Brewis & Linstead 2000a). This 'sex worker' discourse attempts to remove sex work from the realms of deviance or criminal behaviour and place it in the category of work. This in turn enables the sex worker, like Claudia, to frame the service and her labour as a 'commodity exchange'. Thus, looking at prostitution as a form of market exchange removes any requirement of sentiment on the part of the participants. It also removes the ritualised performance of sentiment or obligations that one associates with a relational sexual encounter, or what Prasad refers to as a 'gift exchange' (Prasad, 1999:185).

Brewis and Linstead's argument is drawn out in a different service work literature that looks at the way in which workers negotiate embodied opportunities in the labour market (2000a). Zukin, for example, argues that rather than presenting the negotiation of service work as detrimental in terms of the relationship of 'real and fake selves', emotional labour can be viewed as an enjoyable process, as a resource for workers to draw upon to create opportunities in labour markets characterised by precarious employment (1995: 154). In her account, emotional labour is performed as cultural capital, and thereby becomes a means to democratise the relationship between worker and client/customer. Rather than establish a relationship based on deference and subordination to the customer (see Adkins, 1995; Hall, 1990; Hochschild, 1983), the worker uses her/his personal skills and embodied experience to establish a particular style of work that combines deference, friendliness, embodied dispositions, educational qualifications, life experience and so forth (Zukin, 1995). Thus, drawing on Zukin's theory, the emotional labour and identity work of sex workers would seem less corrupting and alienating and more could be made of authenticity,
knowledge and embodied skills. Elements of Claudia's account could be viewed in this way.

Chapkis (1996) and Hall (1990) present a version of this argument. They point out that the amount of emotional labour and stress involved in service or performance work can vary according to the amount of control or not that a worker exercises and negotiates. For sex workers, this occurs when control over the conditions of work are passed to a third party (client), or the worker is expected to undertake increased work without the corresponding increase in payment, or the burden of negative cultural attitudes towards the work are experienced by the worker. Indeed, the social location of the worker, and the conditions under which the work takes place, can affect how a worker is able to undertake emotional labour (see Chapkis, 1996; McKeganey & Barnard, 1996; O'Neil, 2001; Phoenix, 1999; Truong, 1990). Chapkis (1996) further suggests that the social position of the sex worker, particularly in the case of self-employed workers such as private escorts, can play an important part in creating different experiences in sex work. Therefore, the ability to democratise the client/worker transaction may not be an option for all sex workers, but may vary in degrees. For example, in Truong's study, the bargaining power of sex workers (call girls) was dependent upon skills, sexual, social and intellectual, as well as the level of physical attractiveness (1990). Sex workers who did not have access to such resources (social positions) to provide such skills or knowledge were unable to achieve such a high degree of bargaining power in terms of autonomy and earning power (Truong, 1990: 188). Perkins, by contrast, argues that sex work can be viewed as inherently empowering, in that female prostitutes may exert power over sexual interactions through their acquisition of (work-based) knowledge, enabling them to set limits and implement boundaries to their work within the client encounter (Perkins, 1991: 389). Similarly, Desiree, the self-employed prostitute in O'Connell Davidson's study, is able to exercise a great deal of control over the details of each of her client encounters by virtue of her independent operator status (for example, control over the geographic location of the encounter) (1994; 1995). In addition, O'Connell Davidson comments, "Desiree has far more experience of the prostitute-client encounters than does the average punter" (1995: 5).

**Professionalism: 'collective action'**

According to O'Neil, the social organisation of prostitution has undoubtedly been affected by the growing politicised voice and influence of the 'prostitutes' rights movement', the links with feminism and the rise of grassroots organisations supported by 'experts' and
professionals (1997: 18). The aim of these organisations has primarily been the abolition of legislation that discriminates against women and men who work as prostitutes, and the reframing of prostitution as sex work and prostitutes as sex workers (Chapkis, 2000; see Chetwynd, 1996; English Collective of Prostitutes, 1997; Jenness, 1993; McLeod, 1982; Outshoorn, 1998; Weitzer, 2000). More significantly, the arguments that these groups have adopted involve the articulation of the sociological themes identified in the service work literature. In the Netherlands, for example, this resulted in the attention of policy makers and prostitutes' rights activists directed towards creating conditions in which women can freely decide whether they want to engage in sex work (Marchand, Reid, & Berents, 1998). An important part of prostitutes' rights groups and movements has been the 'normalisation' or 'neutralisation' of the prostitute image in an attempt to reframe prostitution as sex work and construct the prostitute as a professional. However, the dilemma here for prostitutes' groups/collectives is the issue of what is a professional prostitute. For example, Chapkis comments that many of the women who work in the sex industry performing what she terms 'erotic labour' do not identify as sex professionals (1996: 185). Jenness notes that self-advocacy efforts by sex workers and groups have been complicated by conflicts over who has the right or authority to speak for and behalf of the prostitute (1993: 116). Furthermore, she argues that part of the normalising process of prostitution has seen some groups present to the public a 'prostitute norm' that is far removed from the popular stereotype, a more functional and desexualised version of the real prostitute (1993: 116). In this way, Jenness argues that working-class street prostitutes then become an image problem for those intent on improving the status of their profession (1993).

Marchand et al. address this dilemma and argue that the construction of the emancipated sex worker as 'the norm' in legal texts and in prostitutes' rights discourses not only fails to capture the diversity of the industry but also reinforces existing hierarchies and stratification between native and migrant sex workers (1998). This is particularly evident in the promotion of professionalism for sex workers by frontline organisations such as Rode Draad (Red Thread), who have for example, been advocating a universal price/fee standard among sex workers to ensure that women do not charge customers below the going rate. Marchand et al. argue that this approach effectively ignores the fact that some sex workers, such as migrant workers, are often forced by market conditions and competition to offer their services at competitive rates in order to survive, further emphasising the existing divide between native (professional) workers and migrant (amateur) workers (1998: 978). This
example reveals how the complex composition of the sex work industry presents a dilemma for self-representation and self-advocacy by prostitutes.

This dilemma of representation and identity of the sex industry has been added to by the over-representation of certain markets in statistical studies. Here the methodological problems in studying largely underground, secretive and illegal markets have meant that access to sex workers has relied upon 'captive populations' such as clinic patients (Day & Ward, 1990; Harcourt & Philpot, 1990; Ward & Day, 1997), drug rehabilitation and outreach programmes and clinics (O'Neill & Barberet, 2000; Phoenix, 1999), court appearances, routine police 'beats' (Benson & Matthews, 2000; Phoenix, 1999; Sharpe, 1998), and visible forms of sex work (street) (McKeganey & Barnard, 1996; Sterk, 1996). Thus, more visible forms of prostitution such as street work are given more prominence than, say, indoor sex work. Phetersen comments that

> Those studies tell something about prisoners, IV-drug users, patients and runaway children (perhaps also about the role of commercial sex in their lives), but do not provide a profile of 'The Prostitute'.

(Phetersen cited in Chapkis, 1996: 184)

Chapkis (1996) argues that the number of street prostitutes can vary considerably from country to country, and Brewis and Linstead (2000a) indicate that this variation can also occur between regions. A high degree of employment stratification exists in prostitution, which often correlates with the geographical place in which sex work is carried out, affecting key characteristics of the work such as autonomy, safety, reward and condom use (Brewis & Linstead, 2000a; O'Connell Davidson, 1998; Perkins, 1991). Self-employed sex workers, those who claim to enjoy the greatest autonomy in their work, are found in highly specified contexts, and are able to exert a greater amount of control over their client encounters and work practice. For example, Desiree, in O'Connell Davidson's study, works from her own premises and is able to dictate the limits and terms of the client transaction. She is highly skilled and will refuse to perform acts/services that she finds too repulsive or intimate and, therefore, does not see herself as powerless in relation to clients (1994, 1995).

Employment stratification within the sex work industry and ideas pertaining to professionalism often tend to be considered in terms of prostitutes like Desiree. She represents a high standard of work ethic and professional practice and, therefore, reaps
financial rewards. At the other end of the scale, street workers are perceived to be, by and large, less remunerated, less safe and less professional. However, stratification also exists within sex markets, based on ambiguous principles of professional behaviour/conduct. In her overview of commercial sex venues and markets, O'Connell Davidson notes that sex workers have differing notions in terms of what constitutes professional behaviour/practice in accordance with where their sex work takes place (1998). Sex workers often find themselves working within and implementing the implicit codes of conduct and professional standards specific to the sex market in which they operate (see Albert, 2001; McKeganey & Barnard, 1996; Perkins, 1991; Sharpe, 1998). The street workers in McKeganey and Barnard's study, for example, talk about professionalism in terms of particular standards of behaviour and dress which they feel some women fail to match up to (1996: 29). Notions of professional work practice for sex workers in Amsterdam, according to Marchand et al., are linked to the ability of women to manage the movement between public (work) and private spheres through the use of physical (condoms) and psychological (work persona) barriers between themselves and the client (1998: 976). For the professional worker, the condom signifies the difference between commercial sex and intimate sex not only as a physical barrier, but also as an indication of their ability to control the client encounter (Marchand et al., 1998; Woods, 1996).

Indeed, largely as a result of prostitutes' rights groups and outreach work with sex workers, safe sex has become synonymous with professionalism in sex work. The HIV and AIDS pandemic signalled a dramatic change in the political environment, particularly in terms of the political strategies of these groups, witnessing a reworking of their feminist discourses to accommodate public health discourses (Chetwynd, 1996; Donovan & Harcourt, 1996; Jenness, 1993). Health based collaborative research by prostitutes' collectives, health groups and academics has been instrumental not only in supporting and developing some pioneering work in the health sector, but also in terms of constructing the prostitute as an informal 'health professional' and peer educator (Day, 2000; Day & Ward, 1990; Dayan & Healy, 1996; Donovan & Harcourt, 1996; Harcourt, 1994; Van Beek, 1994; Ward & Day, 1997). Information, education and support around women's self-empowerment through health has been central to the work undertaken in these studies of the sex industry and central to the philosophy of prostitutes' collectives.

In New Zealand, for example, the key role of the NZPC has been to promote the health and welfare of sex workers, which has been important for securing funding for the organisation, and to enable the collective to utilise their position to pursue a political agenda
(Chetwynd, 1996; Eden, 1997). As the new health provider in the voluntary sector through its contractual relationship with the health authorities, Eden argues that the NZPC is seen to effectively contribute both towards self-regulation of professional prostitutes and to the promotion of good and safe work practice by workers (1997). The new discourse of the 'healthy hooker' also emphasises the power that the sex worker has in the client encounter and directly challenges the connection between prostitution and disease. Crucial to this 'alternative' discourse of the 'healthy hooker' according to Eden, has been the media campaign by the NZPC in their attempt to influence public thinking and set out the ideals for 'professionally' managing safe sex (1997: 119). In this sense, West argues that the NZPC is playing a critical role in the professionalisation of prostitution analogous to Red Thread in the Netherlands, and thereby effectively contributing to industry differentiation through their 'professional dialogue' (2000: 115).

Regulating and Organising Sex Markets and Sex Businesses

The dilemmas of organising sex workers as professionals are revealed in a different way by authors who focus on the regulation of sex markets. Historical analysis of sex markets points to the relationships between 'whores', the state, working class communities, the regulation of the body, women's role and position in society and the fact that prostitution has always been perceived as work that women can resort to in order to make a living (see Corbin, 1990; Frances, 1994; Levesque, 1986; MacDonald, 1986; Roberts, 1993; Walkowitz, 1980). Furthermore, the trends and shifts in the moral, ideological and symbolic images and associations relating to prostitution documented in these studies, reveal the contradictions inherent in attempts to regulate such markets. Corbin's work, for example, describes how the interrelated discourses of municipal authorities, hygienists, the police and judiciary combined to organise the regulation of sex markets in France around three major issues (1990). These were: the need to protect public morality, particularly in terms of the maintenance of the innocence of young women 'from the spectacle of vice'; the need to protect male prosperity since prostitution was perceived to be a risk to social mobility and patrimony; and, thirdly, the need to protect the nation's health as the prostitute was seen as a vector of disease (1990: 209-211). Corbin illustrates how these discourses led to constructing regulatory approaches for the containment of prostitution based upon the principles of tolerance, containment and surveillance (1990: 215).

Regulatory policies to contain or control sex markets have been well documented in a large body of work focusing on legislative controls, debates surrounding law reform detailing the
complexities of policy development and the diverse interests at play (see Cheney, 1988; Edwards, 1997; English Collective of Prostitutes, 1997; Hubbard, 1998, 1999; Jordan, 1992; Kilvington, Day & Ward, 2001; Matthews, 1996; Neave, 1994; O'Neill, 1997; Outshoorn, 2001; Scutt, 1986; Sharpe, 1998; Weitzer, 1999; Zatz, 1997). What emerges from these studies is that the practical policing of prostitution has proved problematic for policy makers and law enforcement agents. Weitzer comments that to actively monitor and police sex markets can prove time consuming, expensive and often futile, particularly in terms of invisible or indoor sex businesses (1999: 90). Brock's study of the Toronto indoor sex markets illustrates the resilient nature of sex businesses and sex workers (1998). The targeting of sex workers and businesses by the police did little to reduce the number of sex workers and businesses and often resulted in markets reinventing themselves, for example, from saunas to massage parlours and encounter studios to escort agencies (Brock, 1998). Brock's study demonstrates how particular forms of prostitution take on greater social meaning and, therefore, public, media and state action at particular times. Thus, in this way, Brock attempts to illustrate the various ways in which legislation, local government and businesses, community groups and law enforcement agents contribute to the shape of commercial sex markets (1998). Similarly, Marchand et al. note that attempts by collectives and prostitutes' rights organisations to professionalise sex work - through the decriminalisation of prostitution and a greater toleration of sex work - has actually seen increased involvement of the state and municipal authorities in terms of surveillance of sex markets (1998: 979). In the Netherlands, this has meant the introduction of new regulations such as health and hygiene requirements as well as building safety and fire codes and so forth, with the responsibility for 'policing' the sex industry passed onto the business sector (1998: 979).

Thus, the key to understanding the organisation of sex markets is not simply to document the differences in approaches to controlling or containing sex work markets, but, rather, to show how local arrangements are produced, how the combination of actors in particular circumstances can lead to some outcomes and not others, as West and Austrin suggest (2002: 494). Furthermore, they suggest that accounting for diversity and change within particular locales requires the consideration of the interconnections between individual actors and groups of actors on different levels, and the exploration of recurring patterns of conflict and cooperation in an attempt to organise sex work practice (West & Austrin, 2002: 499). For Brewis and Linstead, this translates into the understanding that spatially located materialities are key to shaping sex work practice (2000a). They suggest that the placing of the individual sex worker in terms of legislative climate (degree of tolerance of
sex work), market segmentation (specialised forms of sex work as opposed to generalist forms), labour market (market differentiation), and co-worker support networks (varying from highly organised political campaigns to individualism in which workers compete as opposed to co-operating with each other) can provide for a highly localised experience of sex work in any one area (2000a: 241). Brewis and Linstead also note that studies undertaken in particular locations or which focus on individual sex workers tend to reflect the local and intimate knowledges and experiences specific to these markets within the industry. These in turn are developed by workers as a means to make sense of or manage the material exigencies of those locations (2000a: 241). Thus, Brewis and Linstead underline the importance of 'placing' in terms of the organisation of sex work and, thereby, highlight the fragmented and complex nature of the sex industry (2000a).

Both Day (1996) and Skilbrei (2001) may be seen as examples of this 'turn to the local' advocated by West and Austrin (2002) and Brewis and Linstead (2000a). They explore what makes for variety in sex work and account for dynamic change in sex markets. Skilbrei, for example, considers the patterns of change in the Oslo sex industry by following the rise and fall of massage parlours (2001). What is interesting and different about Skilbrei's approach is that she explores how the organisation of sex work is both materially and discursively constructed, through an analysis of actual network ties and the mobilisation of discourses of sexuality and prostitution, such as community and local business opposition to particular sex work markets, the implementation of local government ordinances, media coverage and police activity. Day reveals how network ties can contribute and create different career possibilities in her study of London sex workers (1996). She also demonstrates how the sex work practice of her sample of street workers can be seen as a product of the policing processes that seek to regulate/criminalise those activities (1990; 1996).

This turn to the 'local' involves recognition of the emergence of different local regimes of regulation. These regimes of regulation of (sex) work both produce new forms of contract and commercial organisation and, at the same time, problematise the overlapping claims of sex work as 'profession' and as markets. This 'turn' requires that we explore the particular formal and informal arrangements through which market, state, management and sex workers intersect to facilitate particular types of sex work markets and particular modes of operation/sex work practice. To show how these networks and actors are actively connected requires us to attend to the ways in which work has been analysed in sociological accounts of more conventional work. Thus, in place of viewing the exchange
of sexual services as a metaphor of alienation in the work process, I propose that we view the sale of sexual services as a process involving a struggle over what constitutes work.
Regulating Sex Work

Prostitution, like gambling, is an area of activity that not only persists in the face of legal and moral condemnation but also has expanded and become more visible over the last two decades. The 'practical' and 'effective' regulation of this expansion of 'prostitution' presents a number of dilemmas for state policy makers and law enforcement agents. Historically, prostitution has been viewed as morally suspect, deviant, and a threat to public order, with prostitute women presented as possible vectors of disease (see Corbin, 1990; Edwards, 1981; Fleming, 1988; MacDonald, 1986; Robinson, 1984; Smart, 1992; Sullivan, 1997). State policies pertaining to prostitution have tended towards what could be described as 'abolitionist' or 'criminalisation' policies, thus rendering prostitution-related activities illegal in an attempt to address the primary concerns of sexually transmitted 'disease', public order and, of course, the protection of 'decent' women (see Corbin, 1990; Kehoe, 1988; Kilvington, Day, & Ward, 2001; Levesque, 1986; MacDonald, 1986; Pheterson, 1989; Walkowitz, 1980). However, in practice the selective interpretation and enforcement of legislation by the police and judiciary has variously sought to prohibit or impede prostitution and/or regulate the behaviour of prostitute women (secure access to prostitute women) (see Corbin, 1990; O'Neill, 1997; Pheterson, 1989; Roberts, 1993; Scutt, 1990; Smart, 1992; Summers, 1975). This has meant that certain sex markets, businesses and individuals have been permitted to operate (albeit discreetly) while others have been targeted for police action at particular times and locations (Neave, 1994). The consequence is local diversity within and across societies.

In recent decades a number of social developments have further contributed to shaping prostitution policy and the regulation of sex markets. These include the rise of social and 'grass-root' movements (including women's movements) supporting claims for gender equity and civil rights. Prostitutes' rights movements in particular have been concerned with 'identity politics', and the health and welfare of sex workers and their clients. Similarly, citizens' or neighbourhood groups have mobilised themselves to protect
property values, and 'quality of life', addressing the issue of public order and 'nuisance' (Brock, 1998; Hubbard, 1998; Kilvington et al., 2001; Matthews, 1996; Skilbrei, 2001). In addition, commercial actors active in the sex industry have become more organised among themselves and more willing to co-operate with the police and local authorities. Such movements have problematised prostitution by both reworking and informing the interrelated discourses of health professionals, municipal authorities, the judiciary, the police, community residential groups, sex workers' organisations, academics, and the media (see Brock, 1998; Chetwynd, 1996; Edwards, 1997; O'Neill, 1997; Plumridge & Chetwynd, 1996; Skilbrei, 2001; Sullivan, 1990; Ward & Day, 1997). In response to the pressure to address these diverse issues, state policies and policing procedures have generally tended towards an approach of toleration and containment of certain sex markets, both informally and at an official level (Benson & Matthews, 2000; Sharpe, 1998). Towards the latter part of the twentieth century, this has in some cases resulted in the increased state 'licensed' involvement of community and health groups, and prostitutes' rights groups in the informal regulation of sex work (Chetwynd, 1996; Eden, 1997; Outshoorn, 2001; West, 2000). In turn, this legitimisation of 'official' groups has led to calls by these groups for the revision of prostitution legislation (see Bell, 1994; Chetwynd, 1996; Eden, 1997; English Collective of Prostitutes, 1997; Jennes, 1993; Neave, 1994; O'Connell Davidson, 1998).

This policy of inclusion of 'unofficial' groups tends to combine with other policies directed towards criminalisation, legalisation, and decriminalisation. In practice, these forms may be combined in particular to suit the local market context (Day, 1996; Hubbard, 1999; Phoenix, 1999; Sharpe, 1998). The new combinations signify more complex relations between sex workers and the vested and competing interests of the different parties: the police, local councils, community groups, health agencies and collectives (see West, 2000). Furthermore, I will illustrate this with examples from the Netherlands and Australia. This approach also blurs the boundaries between decriminalisation and legalisation. Such blurring occurs when regulations and/or controls are included into policy reform to align with differentiated sex markets, localities, policing procedures, and health initiatives.

**Criminalisation and the Police**

The criminalisation of sex work involves the implementation of laws regulating prostitution related activities as a means to control the more 'offensive' aspects of sex work, such as, soliciting/loitering in a public place for the purpose of prostitution. Criminal sanctions are
used to prevent prostitution related activities that will cause public nuisance in residential areas (brothel keeping or soliciting offences), and often cited by enforcement agents and legislators as a means of harm reduction for sex workers by preventing the exploitation of vulnerable or underage individuals (living on the earnings of prostitution or the procurement of individuals for the purpose of prostitution offences) (see Neave, 1994; Pickles, 1992; Shaver, 1985; Knight, 1987; Weitzer, 1999). However, research indicates that traditional laws criminalising prostitution related activities tend to have little lasting effect on the numbers of those who buy and sell sexual services (see Cheney, 1988; Frey, Reichert, & Russell, 1981; Knight, 1987; Neave, 1988; Phoenix, 1999; Plumridge, Chetwynd, Reed, & Gifford, 1997; Sharpe, 1998). Weitzer (1999), comments that though activities associated with prostitution are criminalised in the U.S., police practices are typically orientated towards containment. Police containment policies are characterised by periodic arrests and occasional sweeping crackdowns on prostitutes rather than the routine enforcement of the law. Punitive policing practices require commitment of substantial criminal justice resources, for example, time consuming undercover operations particularly in the case of indoor (generally discreet) sex businesses/markets (Weitzer, 1999, 2000). Thus, some U.S. cities now implement an informal policy of "de facto decriminalisation" for indoor prostitution, essentially ignoring certain sex markets such as, call girls, escort agencies and massage parlours, unless a formal complaint is made (Weitzer, 1999:90). This approach can be found in New Zealand and in certain areas of the U. K. where the indoor sex markets such as escort agencies, massage parlours, private escorts are allowed to operate 'discreetly' thus freeing police resources for the more problematic forms of sex work. In Britain, for example, Phoenix comments that the police continue to regulate 'visible' prostitution when required to do so in an attempt to reduce the numbers of street prostitutes in particular areas, while at the same time tolerating the growth of less visible or 'discreet' forms of prostitution, which they consider to be less of a 'public nuisance' (1999). Sex workers, therefore, often operate with the knowledge that their situation is precarious and that punitive legislation can be introduced and enforced if the police receive sufficient complaints.

Criminalising policies are clearly linked to differences in the structure and organisation of sex markets with regulatory procedures that target or problematise certain markets more than others (Brewis & Linstead, 2000a; Brock, 1998; Day, 1996; Phoenix, 1999; Skilbrei, 2001). Neave (1988) suggests that changes in prostitution laws and regulation determine where prostitutes seek their clients and work. Furthermore, Brewis and Linstead (2000a) comment that the local variations in the experience and interpretation of prostitution are
significantly influenced by legal constraints and policing procedures which themselves tend to be subject to economic, political, moral and social factors (Bowling & Foster, 2002; see Hobbs, 1988; Johnston, 2000; Mackay, Cameron, & Young, 1986; Manning, 1977; Sanders & Young, 2002; Wright, 2000). Brock (1998), adds to these observations that local economic and state interests can work to develop the idea that certain forms of prostitution are constructed as an urban social problem, resulting in law enforcement practices that target specific markets while tolerating others (see Hubbard, 1999; Sharpe, 1998). Furthermore, Brock (1998) suggests that discourses surrounding economic shifts, urban development, policing practices, local state/council interests, and the media can construct the social and legal frameworks for regulating prostitution (see also Herbert, 1997; Hubbard & Sanders, 2003).

In her example of Toronto’s indoor sex market, Brock (1998) illustrates how a particular branch of this market was singled out by neighbourhood groups as problematic because it threatened to lower the market value of local property and businesses. The mobilisation of popular fears concerning the sex industry by the media - through the use of stereotypical imagery of prostitution - resulted in the enforcement of prostitution legislation and local authority ordinances by the police to close down the particular sex market. In this way, a specific sex market is constructed as problematic through discourse using diffuse notions of 'public nuisance' and an assumed connection with criminal behaviour and issues of personal safety in particular neighbourhoods (Day, 1996; McKeganey & Barnard, 1996; Phoenix, 2000). However, the targeting of a specific prostitution market can often result in a market reinventing, reshaping or relocating itself and in doing so, illustrate its resistance to enforcement practices and legislation. In Toronto, this manifested itself in the indoor sex market moving from saunas to massage parlours, encounter studios and escort services in order to circumvent the law and enforcement agents (Brock, 1998). Similarly, Skilbrei (2001) argues that the indoor sex market (massage parlours) in Oslo was considered problematic by feminists, activists and neighbourhood groups who claimed that it was a danger to personal safety, their children and most importantly, real estate values. Like Brock’s example, the city council, according to Skilbrei (2001), used building and health regulations in addition to manipulating media coverage with stereotypical ‘prostitute’ imagery (associated with street prostitution), to rouse public support to combat and close down the massage parlours.

Police targeting of sex workers and businesses often does very little to reduce the number of prostitutes and the demand for their services, and can result in worsening the situation of
individual prostitutes through the imposition of fines or incarceration (Chapakis, 2000; Day, 1990; Neave, 1988; O'Neill, 1997). An alternative approach to the policing of prostitution involves the targeting of clients as well as or instead of sex workers. The Swedish State recently introduced such a policy. This approach places a greater emphasis on rescuing 'victims' (the prostitute) rather than punishing sex workers. Conviction for purchasing sexual services carries a penalty of a fine or up to six months imprisonment (Kilvington et al., 2001). In addition to targeting the clients of prostitutes, the Swedish approach attempts to actively encourage sex workers to exit sex work and retrain. Though the U.S. has taken a similar approach to the regulation of prostitution through the targeting of clients, rehabilitation is aimed at prostitutes’ customers (johns) rather than the prostitutes themselves (Weitzer, 1999; 2000). The first ‘johns’ school’ was opened in San Francisco in 1995 1. Another innovative programme adopted in the U.S. is car seizure, inspired by the drug forfeiture laws, whereby the police are empowered to confiscate customers’ cars when they have been caught in the act of soliciting sexual services on the street2. However, in contrast, the Swedish government supplies funding for municipal prostitute projects, which include counselling and training incentives for prostitutes. Crucial to the Swedish policy has been the collaboration and communication between the police and social services. However, according to Kilvington et al. (2001), a reduction in the number of women working visibly on the streets is unlikely to indicate a move out of sex work altogether. They suggest that it is probable that both workers and clients have chosen less visible ways of making contact, for example, through the use of technology or the reorganisation of sex markets. Similarly, in the U.K., the Sexual Offences Act 1985 is used to rid residential areas of the ‘nuisance’ of street prostitution through the prosecution of the clients of street prostitutes. The decision to target clients of sex workers comes in response to the call for the reduction of the 'nuisance' of street prostitution from the residential areas rather than the 'rescue' of individual prostitutes (Edwards, 1997). However, the interpretation and implementation of this legislation is often left to the discretion of the police and local residents to determine the level of 'nuisance' and what constitutes 'habitual and persistent' kerb-crawlers (Edwards, 1997; English Collective of Prostitutes, 1997; Matthews, 1996).

1 First Offenders Prostitution Programme for the customers of prostitutes was copied by other cities including Buffalo, Las Vegas, Nashville, St Paul (Weitzer, 1999).

2 Portland, Detroit, New York, Chicago, Washington, San Diego, Milwaukee and Philadelphia are only a few of the cities where such laws have been enacted (Weitzer, 1999).
Legalisation, Decriminalisation and Local Councils

In contrast to the criminalising strategies of the U.S.A., the U.K. and Sweden, the Dutch and German states have promoted regulative approaches that entail the legalisation of brothels and decriminalisation of street work in certain areas (the creation of toleration zones). Local councils have been empowered to establish 'zones of in specific areas with prohibition maintained in others (see Hubbard, 1999; Hubbard & Sanders, 2003; Kilvington et al., 2001). The Dutch case, for example, makes it clear that diversity of the sex markets makes the enforcement of reform policy extremely complex. This is particularly so in the case of the exploited sex workers from the 'illegal migrant workers' sector of the industry (see Marchand, Reid, & Berents, 1998). In this case, the role of prostitutes' collectives and organisations becomes paramount in the distribution of health and safety issues for sex workers, but this involvement requires further collaboration among sex work groups, the police and health professionals.

The Dutch system of regulation is one that is aimed at the normalisation of some forms of sex work (voluntary), to increase the penalties against those involved in the organisation of involuntary prostitution, and implement 'harm minimisation' policies to regulate the health and safety of sex workers (see Kilvington et al., 2001; Outshoorn, 2001). Legalised or decriminalised prostitution, like that found in the Netherlands or Germany, includes police and health control of workers and businesses through specific legislation (Zajdow, 1992). For example, a legalised system requires sex workers and sex businesses to register or apply for licenses to operate, with the licensing procedure often requiring regular health checks of sex workers (see Albert, 2001; Marchand et al., 1998; Weitzer, 1999). Furthermore, the recent legislative changes in prostitution laws in the Netherlands and Germany have enabled the governments in these countries to collect sales and income taxes on the services of prostitutes working in licensed brothels. In return, (legal) sex workers receive health care, pensions and unemployment insurance (Passariello & Fairlamb, 2002). In this way, a legalised system of prostitution control requires the collaboration of agencies such as local authorities, police, income tax department, health groups and social services in order to regulate and monitor the sex markets and to represent the interests of both sex workers and local communities working within a specific legal framework. However, it has been claimed that the Dutch approach to reform has essentially created a 'two tier' system of legal and illegal sex workers, effectively shutting out workers who do not 'fit into' government specifications or those who refuse to submit to registration or mandatory health checks (Kilvington et al., 2001; Marchand et al., 1998). In addition, the implementation or interpretation of government policy is subject to local authority agendas
and political interests, particularly in the use of town planning ordinances and the designation of toleration zones and planning permission (see Brewis & Linstead, 2000a; Hubbard & Sanders, 2003; Kilvington et al., 2001; Neave, 1994; West, 2000; Zajdow, 1992).

In contrast, the approach of decriminalisation in its purest form would remove all criminal penalties and result in a laissez-faire approach in which prostitution would be left unregulated (see Weitzer, 1999). This is an approach mainly favoured by prostitutes' rights groups (Chetwynd, 1996; English Collective of Prostitutes, 1997; Weitzer, 1999). However, in practice, safeguards are often incorporated into decriminalisation policy in order to ensure/promote the health and safety of workers and the public. The approach generally entails the removal of laws pertaining to prostitution-related activities such as soliciting, whereby sex workers and businesses would be free from police control, but subject to regulation by the same civil employment law and planning guidelines as non-sex businesses (Hubbard, 1999; West, 2000). In addition, provisions against the exploitation and/or 'forced prostitution' of women and minors are often retained and implemented by local councils/authorities and the police, as are regulations to protect public amenities and the 'nuisance' aspect of the trade. Supporters for the decriminalisation of sex work envisage the establishment of "cottage industries", enabling women to 'freely' work from their own homes or rented apartments in small groups and to advertise in newspapers/contact magazines without being charged for brothel keeping, soliciting and so forth (Hubbard, 1999; Neave, 1994; NZPC, 1996). However, decriminalisation in its 'purest' form has not been adopted as a solution to the problems arising from prostitution.

The Australian case of legislative reforms presents an explicit example of the combination of decriminalisation and legalisation policies. The different approaches to decriminalisation and legalisation implemented in Australia over the last decade have been protracted processes often involving several stages in an attempt to find a format that works and is suited to the particular markets (see Bennet, 1992; Gordanicyn, 1998; Neave, 1994; Sullivan, 1990; West, 2000). Tougher penalties or regulations have been introduced for street prostitution (and other 'illegal activities') alongside a policy of decriminalisation that has expanded legal definitions of prostitution, and new registration requirements for workers. In addition, the responsibility for implementing new regulations for monitoring the sex work industry has shifted from the police to a collection of bodies such as social services, local councils, health and safety authorities and sex worker organisations. In Victoria, a government review of prostitution policy and the subsequent passage of the
Prostitution Control Act 1995, established the Prostitution Control Board and an Advisory Committee. The board was given a wide range of responsibilities, such as setting out the conditions for administering license applications and renewals and approving managers, monitoring the operations of service providers (brothels and escort agencies), to liaise with the police, Occupational Health and Safety Authority, and the Australian Taxation Office (see Sullivan, 1997). The Board, according to Sullivan, is also required to assist organisations involved in helping sex workers to exit the industry, to develop educational programs for magistrates, police and community workers and to disseminate information about the dangers inherent in sex work (1997: 214). However, the delegation of tasks and monitoring responsibilities to outside bodies and groups can fall victim to possible biases or political or moral position of the particular groups involved (see Neave, 1994; Sullivan, 1990). For example, the antipathy of some local councils towards the process of granting planning permits for brothels and escort agencies has made the process costly and often time consuming (see Neave, 1994; Sullivan, 1997).

In New South Wales, recent legislative reforms and amendments to existing laws failed to establish a registration or licensing scheme for brothels and escort agencies, leaving them in a 'legal grey area', with the expectation that sex businesses will operate discreetly in 'agreed' areas3 (with planning permission) (see Sullivan, 1997: 217). Control of these businesses is covered by the Disorderly Houses (Amendment) Act, which sets out the grounds for which a complaint may be brought against a brothel in the "Land and Environment Court". Councils can make an application for the closure of a brothel when they have received sufficient complaints from local residents. The offences of loitering and soliciting were repealed and replaced with Offences in Public Places and later by the New Summary Offences Act, aimed at redirecting commercial sex businesses and street prostitution to commercial areas, and in theory is applied to both sex workers and clients. This approach allows the police discretionary power to decide what is offensive behaviour in terms of street prostitution. Nevertheless, street prostitution remains a problem in certain areas (see Smith, 2003). Hubbard (1999) suggests that local authorities are not able to exercise such discretionary power since the burden of proof required for the closure of brothels effectively means that the police turn a 'blind eye' to the running of brothels based on environmental grounds as opposed to moral grounds (see also Smith, 2003). Hubbard (1999) further argues that the approach to regulating prostitution in New South

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3 The Act sets out the criteria: whether the relevant brothel is operating near, or within view of a church, school, hospital, or any place frequented by children; whether the brothel causes a disturbance in the neighbourhood; whether sufficient off street parking has been provided; whether the operation of the brothel interferes with the amenity of the neighbourhood.
Wales is the closest to resembling a system of decriminalisation, with the sex businesses operating within parameters of town planning. However, home-based sex work remains 'illegal' to a large extent, with operators working without planning or council consent from residential areas running the risk of being shut down and/or taken to court. These workers account for about 40% of the sex work industry, with up to 4000 private workers in New South Wales (O'Rourke & Nicholls, 2003). In 2003, South Sydney Council introduced a policy to treat private sex workers like any other home-based small businesses. These businesses are not required to apply for development applications and are controlled under the Council’s code of conduct for home-based businesses which sets clear limits on things such as noise, signage and the number of operators from each premises. Recently, Marrickville Council has proposed to implement the same approach to home-based workers in an attempt to regulate private escort or home-based sex market within its area of jurisdiction (O'Rourke & Nicholls, 2003).

**Collaboration and Self-regulation**

Health is a vital issue for sex workers. Many sex workers’ organisations have their origins in the AIDS/HIV crisis in which state interest in the control of prostitutes as vectors of disease saw the introduction of state funding for prostitutes’ collectives (Chetwynd, 1996; Donovan & Harcourt, 1996; West, 2000). Prostitutes’ collectives have been used by state and local government as a base for the involvement of community and health professionals with the sex work industry. Government funding for community groups and prostitute collectives, though often skeletal, nevertheless greatly enhances the ability of groups to organise volunteer services and resources. Such funding also gives them a degree of legitimacy on behalf of the sex work industry (Donovan & Harcourt, 1996). For example, funding from the New South Wales Health Department to the Australian Prostitutes’ Collective in 1986 initiated health services specifically for sex workers in addition to needle exchange and drug programmes. Donovan and Harcourt (1996) claim that prior to law reforms in New South Wales, S.T.I. rates (sexually transmitted infections) among sex workers were comparable to developing nations. Today, with the exception of international and migrant sex workers, women in the N.S.W. sex work industry are rarely diagnosed with S.T.I. or HIV infection (Donovan & Harcourt, 1996: 63). Donovan and Harcourt attribute this change to a climate of law reform, the formation and funding of community organisations, and peer education and support (1996:63). Though government funding via prostitutes’ collectives and community organisations has been targeted directly at immediate health issues such as HIV and STI prevention, the wider agenda of legal and
other social injustice reforms have longer term implications regarding health. For example, since its formation in 1985, Red Thread (de Rode Draad), a prostitute collective in the Netherlands, has been represented on central and municipal government committees, pushing for the sex work industry to be treated as a legitimate industrial sector with health and safety strategies for sex workers (Outshoom, 2001).

Legal reforms of sex work in the Netherlands initially followed concerns regarding the enforcement of employment standards and recognition of the risks for sex workers. These included the rights of sex workers to refuse drunk or violent clients, unreasonable productivity demands by employers and sex without a condom (Outshoom, 1998; West, 2000). Such regulation of workers' rights has been coupled with the success of community groups and local councils in securing tighter controls in terms of zoning. Liberal reforms have also enabled new spaces to be created for the involvement of prostitutes' collectives to represent sex workers' interests alongside state control of prostitution. In this way, West argues that sex worker discourse via prostitutes' collectives has been an important (though somewhat variable) influence upon law reform, shaping a variety of health and occupational initiatives alongside state regulations (2000: 107). This merging of health issues and political activism in a bid for law reform, particularly where law reform is not on the national agenda, can be seen in the case of the NZPC (New Zealand Prostitutes' Collective). This is an organisation that operates as an advocate for the sex industry and at the same time monitors the industry for the Department of Health.

Following from the examples of regulatory approaches overseas, this discussion will explore the dilemmas of regulating the diverse sex markets in New Zealand. I have chosen to look at three different sex markets: massage parlours, private escorts and phone sex in order to open out the relations, networks, patterns of struggle and co-operation, and informal arrangements that cut across these markets and how they affect the organisation of sex work businesses and practice.

'Containing Sex Work' in New Zealand

The operation of sex work markets in New Zealand combines elements of criminalisation and containment by the police, regulation by a national prostitutes collective (the NZPC), and informal regulation by commercial operators. Prostitution legislation attempts to contain prostitution to particular locales and markets (Robinson, 1987). Although the 'visible' or 'public' face of prostitution, namely street work, has tended to be the focus of
public attention and police intervention, it is the off street or more discreet forms of sex work that have generally managed to escape attention and yet constitute the greater number of sex workers. In 1996, it was estimated that the New Zealand sex industry involved an estimated 10,000 individuals operating as street workers, escorts, parlour workers, and ship girls, working from sex businesses, motels, home, or other private addresses (Woods, 1996: 121). In Christchurch, it is estimated that there are 1100 masseuses and escorts registered with the police, although at least half of these may not be working at present. In 2000, Detective A, a Christchurch Vice Officer claimed that he counted 450 registered escorts though not all of these escorts were active at the time. In addition, he stated that at that time there were 18 ‘known’ (licensed) massage parlours and approximately 28 'known' street workers. The number of ship workers operating is unknown due to the lack of research in this area, the transitory, and part-time nature of this form of sex work, coupled with the absence of any informal registration or police intervention in this market.

The New Zealand prostitution laws have been concerned with activities associated with prostitution rather than prostitution per se. The laws recognise that prostitution is inevitable, and will always exist no matter what legislation is in place. As a result, such legislation has been primarily concerned with the protection of women from exploitation and the removal of organised crime from prostitution (Eden, 1997; Robinson, 1987). The offences of prostitution related activities include: soliciting, brothel-keeping, living on the earnings of prostitution, procurement for prostitution. The Massage Parlours Act 1978, provides for the licensing of massage parlour operators, but does not refer to the provision of commercial sexual services at all and specifically minimised the involvement of local councils. This initially caused confusion with the 'health massage' industry and created an ambiguous set of regulations for the police to implement and the operators to subvert. In addition, the conventional notions or understandings of prostitution which inform the Act fail to take into account the diverse sex markets that exist in New Zealand.

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4 It is difficult to gauge the exact number of sex workers because the work force is comprised of, for the most part, highly transient, casual and often part-time workers.
5 Unofficial figure given by NZPC 1998
6 In Wellington the NZPC estimates that there are between 400-500 sex workers operating (Catherine Healy, NZPC National Co-ordinator, personal correspondence)
7 Summary Offences Act 1981, s.26, in which it is an offence to offer sex for money in a public place, but it is not an offence to offer to pay for sex
8 Crimes Act 1961, s.147, it is an offence to keep or manage a brothel, this involves the managing of rooms or any kind of place for the purpose of prostitution for one woman or more
9 Crimes Act 1961, s.148(a) it is an offence to live on the earnings of the prostitution of another person, this means that partners of sex workers could be committing and offence by being supported by their spouse
10 Crimes Act 1961, s.149, it is an offence for any person for gain or reward, to procure any woman or girl to have sexual intercourse with any male who is not her husband
In New Zealand, the majority of women working in the sex work industry do so out of economic necessity rather than as a result of coercion from third parties (pimps) (Eden, 1997; Jordan, 1992a; Knight, 1987). Sex workers operate from various locations and provide a diverse array of services. The advent of new technologies such as mobile phones have enabled sex workers to create new spaces for sex work and innovative forms of sex work practice. Responses to these developments have involved local informal arrangements incorporating a more pragmatic approach to policing prostitution. This has seen sex markets operate under ‘quasi-legal’ arrangements negotiated with the police. For example, Christchurch was the first centre in New Zealand to require private escorts to register with the police before they could advertise their services in the provincial newspaper (The Press)\(^\text{11}\). This scheme was the result of collaboration between the police and The Press in an attempt to resolve their respective dilemmas with regards to sex workers. In Auckland, however, the police have been more concerned and proactive with street workers who are scattered across a handful of streets in different (mostly residential) areas. Complaints from residents and business people in these areas have motivated the City Council to become involved in trying to encourage street workers to move to specific or ‘contained areas’ (‘red light zones’).

During the last decade in New Zealand, the police have adopted a more practical approach to regulating the diverse sex markets in spite of the illegality of prostitution related activities. The ambiguity of prostitution legislation saw sex markets operating or reinventing themselves and forcing the police to invent and implement informal controls to monitor and contain these markets (see Eden 1997). These informal arrangements - negotiated between the police, sex businesses and sex workers - evolved as a set of practical solutions to the dilemmas of regulating subversive markets with limited police resources, within an increasingly liberal political climate. Structural changes in the prioritisation or redefinition of police tasks and the increased prevalence of sex worker discourse through the activities of the NZPC, for example, contributed significantly in a shift from active police surveillance of the sex work industry to an approach of supervision and self-regulation of sex markets predicated upon ‘trust’ relationships.

The police in Christchurch, as elsewhere in the country, must regulate and contain the various sex markets within the limits of their resources. Thus, as Wilson (1989) argues, the police at street level work with different combinations of clients and technology and

\(^{11}\)Wellington and Palmerston North police quickly followed the Christchurch example (Eden, 1997). In Auckland however, escorts are unable to advertise in the Herald newspaper.
make decisions to suit each situation. Since the reorganisation of New Zealand police departments in the early 1990s, police time and presence in the sex industry has become something of a ‘scarce resource’ (Cameron & Young, 1986). Detective A of the Christchurch Police, for example, claims that his department is the last to retain a permanent vice officer.

*Other areas have commercial exploitation people, and generally they are looking more at child exploitation. We used to combine the role with vice so that we could double the staff and then be more effective. In a lot of places there is no policing and I think that people have to know, be aware what the rules are and actually have someone there if things turn to custard and so they know that they can go out and get advice and make a complaint or whatever and know that they will be treated properly.*

(Detective A, Christchurch Police)

Thus, the law is only one of many factors that affect the decisions that the police make on a day-to-day basis. Hubbard (1999) suggests that in working to uphold notions of public order, police officers define and subsequently seek to control the spaces they patrol. Furthermore, police control may be achieved by a variety of measures situated both within and outside the law, mediated by local contexts and understandings, with the possibility of being spatially differentiated (Hubbard, 1999). Similarly, Herbert (1997 comments that the police often use a range of territorial tactics that are contingent on how they define the space they are acting in, exercising their discretion over how they use the law in certain contexts and ignoring violations of the law in other situations.

Herbert (1997) offers a way of thinking about the police approach to regulating sex markets in New Zealand. He argues that where there are clear legal distinctions between public and private space set out in prostitution legislation, police officers may disregard this distinction in terms of situations where they consider that they are obliged to take action (Herbert, 1997). Such a situation could be potential kerb-crawlers being warned off in particular residential areas. In other cases, the police may continually ignore blatant violations of laws if they consider that prostitution does not transgress the ‘moral character’ of a particular neighbourhood or offends the public such as the case of the private escort workers in Christchurch. Hubbard adds to this argument by considering the relationship between what he calls ‘morality and spatiality’, with police actions against
prostitution shaped by an interpretation of where it actually occurs (1999: 118). He notes that legislation may help to define where and how the police may act against prostitution related activities, but there still remains considerable spatial variation in the extent to which police enforce these laws (Hubbard, 1999: 118). Police responses to prostitutes differ as much between city districts as they do from city to city (Brewis & Linstead, 2000a; Golding, 1992; Hubbard, 1999).

‘Effective’ Supervision of the Massage Parlour

Undoubtedly, the police have a major impact on what actually becomes defined as crime, which offences are prioritised and which sections of the community are portrayed as ‘dangerous’ or troublesome’ (Bowling & Foster, 2002). However, in the day to day events of ‘practical policing’ Manning (1977) argues that although police organisations may have highly specific rules about mundane matters such as uniform, rules for operational policy are virtually impossible to create. Thus, police practice becomes what Wilson describes as ‘handling the situation’ rather than ‘enforcing the law’ (1989: 37). In New Zealand, this has meant a pragmatic approach to prostitution and has seen the development of informal arrangements and agreements between the police and the sex work markets based less on criminalising sex work and more in terms of normalising the industry through the establishment of “trust relations’, registration schemes and market self-regulation with the police taking a supervisory role. The case of the massage parlour market offers an insight into the way in which effective supervision of these markets is negotiated, who is involved and how the organisation of markets is affected.

Prior to the passage of the Massage Parlours Act 1978, the policing of prostitution in New Zealand was largely aimed at visible forms of prostitution such as street work and businesses masquerading as saunas and massage parlours. However, the link between organised crime and massage parlours in the early 1970s triggered both police and public concern over the connections between massage parlours, drug dealing and money laundering. The Massage Parlours Act 1978 was an attempted organisational solution to meet these concerns, facilitating increased surveillance of managers and owners rather than merely policing sex workers, further supporting the claim that prostitution in New Zealand had become an accepted part of city life (Mr. McLay NZPD 1978:1686:1194). As David Thomson, the Minister of Justice, commented at the time of the passing of legislation,
The Bill has nothing to do with criminalising prostitution, nor is it designed to enforce any particular view of sexual morality... The Bill is wholly concerned with combating what is perceived as the steady spread of organised criminal ventures into large-scale prostitution and all the measures of control set out in the Bill have been included to give effect to that purpose.

(Hon. David Thomson Minister of Justice, NZPD: 12/07/78)\textsuperscript{12}

Thus, key to the control of massage parlours was the implementation of a licensing system aimed at the containment and regulation of prostitution rather than an attempt at eradication.

Thomson was explicit about this aspect of the legislation.

\textit{It is thought that the licensing provisions of the Bill, together with the police powers of entry and inspection will go a considerable way towards ensuring that people operating massage parlours keep within the law.}

(Hon. D. Thomson, Minister of Justice, NZPD: 1978:5062)\textsuperscript{13}

Under the conditions and regulations of the Massage Parlours Act 1978, the police were able to influence who could or could not be licensed to operate a massage parlour and be an approved manager or a masseuse. The application for a massage parlour license requires a police check for convictions relating to prostitution\textsuperscript{14} or drug related offences\textsuperscript{15} and whether the applicant has been refused a license previously or had a license cancelled within the last five years. The police had the power to refuse to endorse a license application to the court if they had reason to suspect that the applicant is not of 'sound character' or associates with people of 'unsound character'.\textsuperscript{16} A company may also apply for a license if the directors of that company comply with the aforementioned conditions. In addition, in the absence of the licensee, massage parlours could also be placed under the supervision of a manager, who must also fulfil the same criteria used for the licensee to determine suitability. All massage parlour licenses must be renewed annually. This gives the police the opportunity, if necessary, to reassess an applicant's suitability\textsuperscript{17}.

\textsuperscript{12} New Zealand Parliamentary Debates
\textsuperscript{13} New Zealand Parliamentary Debates
\textsuperscript{14} Crimes Act 1961
\textsuperscript{15} Narcotics Act 1965 or Misuse of Drugs Act 1975
\textsuperscript{16} What is meant by unsound character is not specified in the regulations of the Massage Parlours Act 1978.
Massage parlour (sex) workers or 'masseuses' (ie

'a person employed or 'engaged' by the licensee to perform massage
in the course of the licensee's business as the operator of a massage
parlour'
(s.2) )

were required to be free of drug and prostitution convictions over the previous ten years
and meet the minimum age requirement of eighteen\(^{18}\) in order to be eligible to work in a
massage parlour. It was a requirement that licensees keep a register of every person
employed or 'engaged' as a masseuse in the parlour\(^{19}\). The register must contain the
working name, full (real) name, address, and date of birth of the masseuses\(^{20}\), and be
supported by a form of I.D. A duplicate copy of the entries in the register is taken by
police during their 'parlour visits'. These are then checked through police records to
ensure that the masseuses have not been convicted for drugs or prostitution related
activities. The register also enables police to keep track of sex workers who are currently
working in Christchurch massage parlours. The register has the potential to encourage
licensees ('employers') to engage 'good' or 'clean' (free from criminal convictions and
connections) 'employees' (Mr. Latter NZPD 1978:1192), and failure to keep an accurate
register could result in the licensee being fined.

Thus, in spite of an ambiguous reference to the prohibition of prostitution taking place on
parlour premises, the Act did not specifically set out to eradicate prostitution, but rather to
remove the threat of organised crime (particularly gangs) from owning or running massage
parlours. The registration of licensees, managers and masseuses works as a bureaucratic
tool of regulation, effectively setting up centrally located licensed premises where sex
workers can operate relatively safely and the police are able to access and monitor these
businesses at will. More importantly, the implementation of the regulations of the Act fell
mostly upon the police, and is therefore subject to police discretion and prioritisation. In
practice, this means that the police accommodate the operation of massage parlours as
commercial sex businesses in return for their compliance to the regulations of the Massage

\(^{18}\) An applicant who applies for a license knowing that they are not eligible commits an offence and is liable to a
fine not exceeding $2,000 s.6 Massage Parlours Act 1978.

\(^{19}\) Section 18

\(^{19}\) Section 19

\(^{20}\) Section 19
Parlours Act 1978 and their avoidance of complaints from the general public. The establishment of 'trust relations' with massage parlour owners, management and workers has resulted in the inspection of the massage parlour register occurring less frequently. Furthermore, visits tended to be pre-arranged unless the police were acting on a complaint.

**Cooperation, 'Trust' and Information**

The police’s main objectives and concerns are ensuring that owners or managers are licensed to operate a massage parlour, and that they maintain a current register of workers. Furthermore, the police view massage parlours as an available source of information or gateway to criminal networks and, therefore, see the potential of establishing a rapport with the staff and masseuses working in the massage parlours.

_I'd say that a lot of the work that we have to do with the sex industry is about talking to people and getting their trust. They're a good source of information, but it's a matter of gaining trust, they have to learn to trust you and it takes a while for that to happen, but if I'm out there and easily accessible without going through the official channels then it's more likely that someone will approach me with concerns about a particular owner or behaviour._

(Detective B, Christchurch Police)

This emphasis on employing a 'trust' rather than a surveillance approach is important because the logistics of stringently applying the conditions of the Massage Parlours Act 1978 present a problem for limited police resources in New Zealand. Detective A comments that:

_[t]he reality is that we don't chase the workers now. What the perception and the reality is a wee bit different. We would try and do a couple of parlours a week but the reality was that it did not always happen. Sometimes we would do a month solid and then something else would come up and we couldn't do the rounds for two or three months._

(Detective A, Christchurch Police)
Similarly, Sharpe (1998) noticed in her study of police teams that active policing of prostitution is often pushed to the bottom of the list of tasks and priorities if other things crop up. The overwhelming opinion of the police seems to be to let the prostitutes ‘do their thing’ within a framework of ‘containment’ and monitoring. This policy of containment described by Sharpe (1998) can also be seen in the approach to policing the sex work industry in New Zealand with its two main aims being to monitor prostitutes and to protect the sensitivities of the general public. In addition, the police have other interests in mind with this approach. Thus, as Detective B suggested, the majority of police work in the sex industry is about talking to people and gaining their trust, principally because massage parlours and sex workers are good sources for intelligence gathering on criminal networks which cut across sex markets and businesses.

Gaining the trust of people involved in the sex work industry is an important tool in police work. However, information has not always been freely supplied to the police by sex workers. Trust between these two groups has to be slowly built and a great deal of information gathering can be opportunistic, as Detective Neale comments:

> [t]hey have to learn to trust you. *It takes a good two years to build up that relationship, it has only been in the last year that things have been improving ... then you get to a peak where you have a good sixty percent of the intelligence coming in and they are telling you what it going on.*

(Detective Richard Neal, Christchurch Police, cited in Eden 1997: 47)

An officer in Sharpe’s study (1998) noted that:

> ... *a lot of them are criminals or know criminals and if you have a good working relationship with them, they’ll talk to you and tell you what’s happening.*

(DET officer cited in Sharpe, 1998: 137)

The validity or reliability of the information from the sex work industry may be treated with a degree of scepticism. However, Detective A from the Christchurch Police states that the primary objective of liaising with sex workers and businesses is to make the women aware of a police presence, make a note of who is working, check up on their welfare and to catch up on ‘local gossip’. It is important for the police to be seen to take an interest in what is
going on, to exchange information with workers and businesses and also advice or reassure workers and businesses about incidents. Trust in the police is not given unconditionally by those in the industry, rather it plays off the informal economy of commercial sex markets. The police in this view work informally doing ‘favours’ (see Hobbs, 1988) for people in the industry. However, as Eden (1997) points out, the police may also exploit the legally ambiguous position held by those in the industry to gain information in return for police toleration of particular practices.

The practical implications of supervision of the massage parlour required the police to establish reciprocal or ‘trust’ relationships with individual sex workers and sex work businesses. These ‘trust’ relationships were predicated on an understanding that sex workers and businesses would agree to operate within the parameters of informal police arrangements and provided for a degree of market self-regulation. Though the police would infrequently visit massage parlours to inspect registers, management were nevertheless expected to keep these registers up to date and to contact the police with the details of any new staff (masseuses). The police could then check the details of the masseuses on their database to ensure that they do not have any convictions that would preclude them from working in a massage parlour. This process of ‘checking out’ potential sex workers functions as a safety guard for massage parlour management, as Bev comments:

_I will be sad to lose the protection of the police if the law changes. It’s nice to know that they’re there when you need them, like checking the girls when they come in for work. I just get on the phone and the police will look up on the computer and say whether or not they’ve got a record, or they might tell me to keep an eye on her, you know, a trouble maker or got connections [gang]. I always phone the details through. I like to make sure the girls are ok._

(Bev, massage parlour manager)

Thus, it is in the best interests of the police and massage parlour management to maintain an ‘open and honest’ relationship with regards to the ‘employment’ of sex workers. Sarah, a parlour owner and B&D mistress, comments that:

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21 However, sex workers and management have been known to use false I.D.s to by-pass certain regulations set out in the Massage Parlours Act 1978.
[w]e actually have a very good working relationship with the police. We set that up right from the start. We were up front with them right from the start with what we wanted to do. We asked them, I mean we had no idea at first, we didn’t know what we were doing. So, we contacted them and found out what we needed to do and we did it and we have always maintained a good open house. They are welcome here at any time and they never come without phoning first and that is usually with a reason.

(Sarah, parlour licensee and B&D Mistress)

However, trust relationships do not rule out ambiguities, rather they exist because of them. The ambiguity of the Massage Parlour Act 1978 resulted in differing interpretations of certain regulations by the police, owners, management and sex workers. For example, an area of contention has been the issue of ‘effective’ supervision of the business (massage parlour). According to section 17 of the Massage Parlours Act 1978, every parlour should be under the ‘effective’ supervision of the licensee or an approved manager (licensed)22. Differing understandings of what is meant by the term ‘effective’ by the police and licensee arise from differing ideas concerning massage parlour operation. For the police, ‘effective’ supervision requires the physical presence of a licensee or a licensed manager or receptionist on the premises for the duration of the hours of business. Supervision time is linear, measured in hours spent on the premises. However, for the licensee, the cost of licensing managers and/or receptionists annually was perceived as expensive and problematic and they had very little incentive to do so because of the temporary nature of the job. The position of manager or receptionist in a massage parlour tends to be characterised by the stigma associated with sex work, unconventional working hours, the mundane nature of the job and generally poor remuneration. Thus, such jobs generally come to be exercised by ex or current sex workers. In turn, this means that there is a high turn over of formal paid staff and this partly explains the reluctance of the owners or licensees to invest in licensing such transient workers. Therefore, the advantages of employing from within the industry tended to be offset by the disadvantages of a high turnover of staff.

In practice, ‘effective’ supervision for the licensee or licensed manager involved the coordination of a range of tasks and activities and the negotiation of multiple temporalities.

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22 The licensee can be fined $2000 for non-compliance
The division of business hours into ‘shifts’, the unpredictability of schedules and staff, in addition to the competing temporalities of clients, retailers, the police, financial advisers, health workers, as well as the police’s requirement of ‘effective supervision’ pushed licensees to adopt new technology such as mobile phones, pagers and email to provide for flexible arrangements. With the assistance of these new technologies, unlicensed receptionists, managers and in some cases parlour workers were left to ‘supervise’ the premises with the licensee ‘on call’. In this way, the licensee was able to accommodate the police requirement to have a licensed individual on the premises at all times. Similarly, limited police resources were unable to regularly monitor the ‘effective supervision’ by licensees or managers and sporadic checks were often confronted by the ‘cunning’ of management who seemed to have perpetually ‘just stepped off the premises for 5 minutes’. Thus, what evolved was a compromise between the police and massage parlour owners and management, whereby ‘effective’ supervision shifted to an understanding that these ‘mobile’ licensees and managers must be able to be contacted at any time and be within a local radius to the business.

The police also stipulated that they would take action against a licensee if a business flagrantly breached the basic principles of operation set out in the Massage Parlours Act 1978, particularly if they received complaints from the public or sex workers against any business. Detective A comments that:

> [a]s long as the parlours stay clean and keep drugs off the premises, and if we receive complaints, and depending on the nature of the complaints, generally we will warn first and then give them an official warning letter which will say that they are overstepping the boundaries and then if they continue to do it and the complaints continue then that’s when we will act. We try and work with the industry and workers because there are a number of benefits for all concerned. Complaints about parlours generally come from parlours themselves when they

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23 Another method for overcoming the supervision issue has been to create a board of directors/company to be the licensee[s]. This occurred at 14B, whereby a couple of the receptionists (myself included) and workers were appointed as non-profit officers of the company. As officers we had to fulfil the same criteria that was set out for managers and owners in the Act and no fee was required for individual officers. We were then able to legally supervise the business.

24 Massage parlour owners and/or managers must be licensed. The massage parlour register must be updated regularly. The premises should not be used for illegal activities - organised crime, drug dealing, exploitation of children or women. A manager or licensee (holder of a license) must either be on the premises or in contact with the premises at all times.
feel that the standards are being breached, when things are being offered that shouldn’t be.

(Detective A, Christchurch Police)

The police were aware that prostitution takes place in massage parlours and took steps towards ensuring that it took place safely through entering into informal arrangements with the owners or management and sex workers to allow the open promotion of safe sex work practice and ceased to prosecute workers and management for having safe sex paraphernalia on the premises or on their person. The police have in the past seized safer sex equipment such as condoms and lubricant as evidence in brothel keeping prosecutions (Eden, 1997). In this process of promoting safe sex practice, policing has been facilitated by the NZPC, which operated as a go between for sex workers and police through the distribution of information. Johnston (2000), observes that private and voluntary sectors have been given increased responsibility in terms of supervising ‘low risk’ crime prevention and community safety as a means to alleviate police workloads/responsibilities. In the case of the NZPC, prostitution activities came to be increasingly controlled by quasi-public networks rather than official law enforcement agencies whereby ‘the network acts as a quasi-cartel which controls the activity within the setting in which it operates’ (Frey et al., 1981: 243).

The relationship between the police and NZPC has operated reciprocally with both parties setting their own agendas. The police were interested in reducing the incidence of exploitation and crime in the sex industry, developing a good relationship with sex workers and businesses, and ensuring that the public was kept safe through the safe working practices of sex workers. The NZPC, in turn, had an interest in supporting sex workers against violent or exploitative clients/employers (Chetwynd, 1996). The police offered one of the only ways through which the NZPC could protect workers from exploitation. Thus, the role of the NZPC could be described as a ‘buffer’ or a ‘broker’ through which sex workers could take disputes to the police. However, the NZPC must endeavour not to alienate owners of commercial sex businesses since they are essentially the gate keepers to sex workers. Thus in this way, the NZPC must negotiate the agendas of business management, the police and sex workers.

Maintaining the health of the sex work industry has been a priority and prerequisite for NZPC funding and, therefore, volunteers visited massage parlours on a weekly basis, distributing industry information and safe sex paraphernalia (at a cost price), updated the
'ugly mugs' book and replenished supply boxes kept by some parlours. The police were often notified by the NZPC if volunteers were prohibited from visiting the premises of a massage parlour. 'NZPC unfriendly management' are considered to have the potential to exploit their workers through blocking the dissemination of NZPC information and safe sex paraphernalia. Thus, massage parlour management tend to be wary in terms of their antagonism towards NZPC. Central to the NZPC’s legitimacy was its ability to promote and sustain the idea that it was principally an organisation made up of sex workers who supported and educated others in the sex work industry. In their attempt to reframe or rework the discourses of prostitution from carriers of disease and deviance to discourses of 'professional workers', the NZPC set up a framework for reference of 'good work practice' and 'safe work practice'. Furthermore, collaborative research between the NZPC and academic public health researchers potentially served to legitimate the organisation as sexual health educators.

Set up in 1987 by sex workers and funded by the New Zealand Government via the Public Health Unit in 1988, the NZPC aimed to provide peer-based education and support in the prevention of the spread of HIV (Chetwynd, 1996; Dayan & Healy, 1996). This coincided with sex workers’ concerns about the impact of AIDS and the economical consequences upon sex markets. As a result, the NZPC was able to gain a strategic institutionalised position in New Zealand (Eden, 1997). Key to the success of the NZPC has been the mainly professional membership and ‘peer’ approach to health education. The NZPC has five drop-in centres in the main cities and outreach programmes throughout New Zealand with a staff of five full-time and approximately fifty part-time volunteer peer educators. The NZPC played a key role in the restructured health service, becoming a new health provider in the voluntary sector through a contractual relationship with the health authorities to fund the drop-in centres, outreach and centre coordinators. On a local level, staff provided advice on safer sex and safer injecting practices, advocacy and legal advice to their peers and provided safe sex paraphernalia such as lubricants, condoms, dental dams and so forth. At a national level, the NZPC provided public advocacy for sex workers, media comment, initiated and collaborated in research and liaison with government departments, including those of health, Social Welfare and the police.

The NZPC has been committed to working with owners, the police and prostitutes at all levels through their outreach programmes, and can be seen as contributing towards the self regulation of what could be termed as ‘professional prostitutes’ through the promotion of

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35 Personal correspondence from a Christchurch NZPC representative
good sex work practice for operators. Jordan (1992b) broadly describes the role of the NZPC as one similar to that of trade unions, to oversee regulations and guidelines of legislative reforms and policies. Eden (1997) argues that the safer sex and good sex work practice messages distributed by the NZPC operate as a quality control mechanism within the industry. Furthermore, through collaborative research undertaken by the NZPC with academics and researchers, the NZPC has attempted to reframe sex workers as ‘professionals’ in their approach to work and health issues, replacing deviance and criminal discourses with health and professional work discourses, and thereby attempting to allay fears that sex workers are vectors of disease. Thus, as West argues, the NZPC has played an ‘active’ key role in the professionalisation of prostitutes and, thus, essentially contributed to industry differentiation (2000:115).

Similarly, Marchand et al. (1998) argue that the discursive distinctions between professional and amateur sex workers are reinforced by prostitutes' collectives’ dialogues on safe sex practice and behaviour, evolving into what is often referred to as professional practice’. Thus, the dichotomy of good/bad hooker can be used to monitor and measure the 'professional practice' of sex workers and therefore determine the professional nature of particular sex markets (see Eden, 1997; Marchand et al., 1998; Ward & Day, 1997). According to Zajdow (1992) the social control of prostitution often relies upon the interpretations of medical, health and public welfare or community groups like that of the NZPC. These structures have the ability to enforce negative labels and stigmatise individuals and groups according to some predetermined moral, ethical or 'professional' position (Zajdow, 1992). Thus, sex workers who do not conform to the constructed norm are assumed to be amateur or ‘bad hookers’. For example, Rode Draad have long pursued a policy to establish a form of market price regulation across markets (Marchand et al., 1998). Though the NZPC have no direct regulatory industry policies there are however, clear indications in their submissions and media correspondence, of their support and advocacy for a sex work industry comprised of private workers or small co-ops (cottage industries).

Monitoring the Market from Within: self-regulation and 'narking'

The establishment of trust relationships between the police and massage parlours resulted in minimal active police involvement. The responsibility for monitoring the massage parlour market thus shifted to the massage parlours themselves (and the NZPC). Thus, massage parlours were free to operate as commercial sex businesses within the general
framework of the Massage Parlours Act 1978, through licensing and registration, and the informal boundaries or codes of practice set out by the police. The police expected the licensee or management of a massage parlour to ensure the safe operation and supervision of the business. This particularly concerned the prohibition of drugs or underage prostitution and any other criminal activity (deemed by the police) from taking place on the premises. Commercial sex businesses, like any other organisation, maintain order through boundary defining activities such as ‘contracts’ and territorial agreements (Frey et al., 1981). Thus, massage parlours implement their own regulations for sex work practice to ensure that they remain within the tacit arrangements for operation agreed with the police. In turn, the police use massage parlours as a means to access sex workers in order to distribute and gather information regarding problematic criminal activity such as child pornography and pedophile rings.

However, this trust type of relationship between the police and massage parlours does not characterise relations between parlours within the market. Here we find examples of both competition and collaboration. Competition within the market tends to manifest itself in businesses closely monitoring each other’s activities and press advertisements in order to ensure that competitors do not ‘overstep’ boundaries. It is no secret within the parlour market that management anonymously phone around different massage parlours to inquire about their competitors’ prices, services, ‘specials’ etc, and also try to trace where certain girls are working. Parlour management are quick to bring any of their competitors’ misdemeanours to the attention of the police. For example, I recall the case of an owner of one of the ‘upmarket’ massage parlours notifying the police that their competitor had ‘unofficially’ employed a worker (not entered her details into the register), because she had a previous drug conviction. This parlour owner, however, omitted to tell the police that she had previously ‘employed’ the same worker in the same way. The action of the parlour owner was brought about by a number of factors such as a disagreement with the worker, her resignation without adequate notice given, and her ‘employment’ by a rival parlour. The high mobility of sex workers within this market could result in rival massage parlours having ‘employed’ the same sex workers and therefore the potential of ‘industrial espionage’. Thus, competition between massage parlours serves as a useful tool for monitoring the market.

26 Massage parlours are notorious locations for fencing stolen goods. Individuals selling stolen (generally shoplifted) goods regularly visit massage parlours, where they are affectionately known as shoppers. The police tend to turn a blind eye to activities such as the minor fencing of goods by shoppers.
By contrast, collaboration between parlours serves to protect the market from outside threat or competition. An example of this collaboration occurred when parlours faced fierce competition from escort agencies, which were successfully operating as ‘brothels’ by offering in-call services and undercutting the massage parlours (Eden 1997). The services that the agencies offered and sold were advertised as time segments (ladies’/escorts’ time) and charged one fee (all-inclusive fee). Since clients were only buying a segment of time and not a ‘massage service’, they were not required to pay a door fee, thus reducing the fee they were required to pay. Operating from residential areas with workers taking on many of the daily tasks involved in running the business, the escort agencies were able to escape from the large running costs incurred by the massage parlours, such as licensing fees, leasing of commercial premises, and wages for receptionists/managers.

Karen comments on the cost of setting up a massage parlour:

"There is a huge cost of setting up a massage parlour. You’ve got to get the right premises and landlord who doesn’t mind what the place is going to be used for, for a start. Then getting the place fitted out and up to the standards that are required, there’s insurance and the cost of running it and then there’s rent if you are leasing the place and that could be anything from $1000 to $4000 a week depending on the place you’ve got, not to mention employing staff, receptionists, cleaners, and getting licenses, It all soon mounts up ...

(Karen, parlour manager)

Escort agencies were able to offer lower prices than massage parlours for essentially the same services as well as offer clients ‘specials’ (discount fees and shorter time segments). Most of the agencies were more flexible in their approach to organizing sex work than massage parlours, with women often working ‘on-call’ and not required to physically be present on the premises for a shift since bookings were generally organised on the phone. The general decrease in the available client dollar - and the serious competition that escort agencies presented - resulted in a number of the licensees and management of massage parlours in Christchurch collectively approach the police with their complaints. They used the Massage Parlour Act 1978 in their argument for closing down the competition from escort agencies. Massage parlour management wanted escort agencies to be subject to the same legal regulations that they had to adhere to if they wanted to provide the same ‘in-call’ service, (effectively operating as a massage parlour).
We were in the situation where we had houses operating as parlours and massage parlours who were unhappy with this set up and made sure that we knew that they were. Some of these escort agencies would be employing fifteen or twenty people and they were effectively operating as massage parlours who didn’t have licenses or controls. So, we spoke to them all that had more than two staff working and gave them the choice that they had to apply for a license or just do outcalls only. Some applied for massage parlour licenses ...

(Detective A, Christchurch Police)

This action resulted in the closing down of the majority of large scale escort agencies and the redistribution of sex workers into working independently (private escorts), or in small ‘co-ops’ (agencies) operating from the same premises.

Thus, the regulation of the massage parlour market was achieved through a ‘coalition’ of owners, management, the police, sex workers, local community groups, and the NZPC, with the effective supervision of massage parlours secured through a system of ‘trust relations’ and market self-regulation. In this way, networks or coalitions have become an effective extension of law enforcement in the regulation of prostitution (Frey et al., 1981)

The ‘Policing’ Escorts

Though the Massage Parlours Act 1978 was aimed at centralising or containing prostitution to particular locations in an attempt to monitor and safeguard sex workers, it nevertheless had the unintended effect of creating or enlarging existing markets. Furthermore, the ambiguity of prostitution legislation allowed sex markets to operate and flourish relatively openly; for example, the emergence of escort agencies as an alternative to massage parlours in the late 1970s (Eden, 1997). Escort agencies provided an alternative to street work for sex workers who were unable to work in a massage parlour because of drug or prostitution convictions. Like massage parlours, escort agencies manoeuvred around the prohibition on prostitution related activities by building on the ambiguity of legislation through selling the escort’s ‘time’ and not a sexual service or massage.

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27 Read as a contingent/contemporary alliance
28 Section18
29 Towards the end of 1997 the number of escort agencies operating in Christchurch had increased to 50 (Eden 1997)
An advantage of working for an escort agency was the relative anonymity that an agency could secure for a sex worker. Escort agencies were not controlled by the Massage Parlours Act 1978 and therefore were not required to complete a register of workers. Furthermore, agencies were initially able to advertise in the newspaper on behalf of the escorts who worked for them. In addition, client contact occurred through a booking system by telephone, thus avoiding the ‘visual request system’ that operates in massage parlours or the visibility of street work. Furthermore, some agencies offered workers a certain amount of flexibility in terms of working hours by operating an ‘on-call’ system. However, the lack of formal regulation of agencies, the absence of a registration or licensing scheme and, therefore, the absence of police monitoring also provided little protection for workers from potential exploitation by owners or management. Often, sex workers claimed that they would receive less for their work with an agency because of the lower ‘inclusive’ fees for services out of which the agency’s fee was deducted as well as additional fees such as towel fees, client fees, late fees, and fines. Helen, a private escort, recalls her experience with an escort agency:

"They set the fees which were bloody ridiculous like we had twenty minute specials for $40 of which you had to give $10 to her (escort manager) and you were expected to give the whole work, and what made me laugh was that if you were late out of the room then you used to cop it, she had fines for everything for being late, for leaving the room untidy and stuff like that and she used to just take it out of the client’s money, because she used to get it as soon as he handed it over, you see you gave her the money as soon as you got it."

(Helen, escort)

The structure and organisation of the escort market and the ability of businesses and escorts to circumvent legislative attempts at containment proved problematic for police control or surveillance of the market. The spatial organisation of agencies and private escorts into discreet suburban addresses - and the relative invisibility of these businesses - meant that the police found it difficult to routinely visit premises or contact workers as they could with massage parlours. Furthermore, the absence of a formal registration or licensing system for escorts meant that the police were unaware of the number and identity of escorts who were or had been operating privately or through agencies. In this context
the police adopted an approach of market surveillance that hinged upon a system of shared supervision and trust relations. Detective A comments that:

\[
\text{[t]he law, the current law is that prostitution is illegal. The reality is that in the police in Christchurch, the way in which we deal with it is we do not actively enforce the law. We react to complaints and from those complaints, depending on the nature of the complaints, we will investigate and warn whoever the complaint is laid against. We generally don't want to take a heavy handed approach, it's better to try and work with the industry and the people in it rather than against them.}
\]

(Detective A, Christchurch Police)

Thus, according to Detective A, policing sex work in Christchurch is no longer a matter of repressive punitive measures aimed at deterrent, but rather focused on attempts to establish reciprocal or trust relations with sex workers. Moreover, as indicated in the case of massage parlours, policing the sex work industry has become an issue of toleration and market self-regulation. Similarly, Ericson and Haggerty (1997) claim that policing is now more preoccupied with producing knowledge that allows for the administration and definition of risks. In this way, surveillance becomes the bureaucratic production of knowledge for risk management of what can be defined as ‘suspect populations’ (Ericson & Haggerty, 1997). Such risk management practices tend to require forms of surveillance that incorporate the collaboration or networking of different social sectors. Furthermore, an information infrastructure using a combination of technology and collaboration enables not only a more efficient service but also opens up possibilities for the acquisition of knowledge and the reorientation of policing (Lyon, 2001).

Such a move can be seen in the collaboration between the Christchurch Police and the Christchurch metropolitan/provincial newspaper (The Press) which resulted in the introduction of a ‘voluntary’ registration system for escorts. This enabled both parties to monitor the escort market, providing the police with the opportunity to compile a database of private escorts operating in the area, and also protect The Press from hoax advertisements. The new registration scheme was able to authenticate escort advertisements, which had become increasingly problematic for the newspaper. Prior to 1993, advertising for escorts and massage parlours had been included in the personal

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30 Massage parlours generally operated by allowing the client to visually select a sex worker (see chapter three)
columns. These columns were often open to abuse from hoax advertisements, and sometimes led to misunderstandings between commercial sex clients and those genuinely looking for friends or partners in the personal columns. An employee of *The Press* explains:

> [b]asically, all escort type advertising, and I use that term very loosely, appeared in the personal columns and in those days the escort services had to go into the personal columns and had to be very carefully worded, and as a result of a bad track record of people putting hoax ads in, all telephone numbers were pulled out and the personals had to use PO box numbers. So, what we were doing here was allowing parlour management and owners to corner a section of the market and not allow any competition. So, the paper’s management said that if we can guarantee that there won’t be anymore hoax phone numbers then we would allow the escorts to use phone numbers and establish an escort column...then it was a case of ringing the police and saying, ’hey this is the scenario that we’re faced with we believe this is what you’re faced with how can we help each other here?’

(Advertising Manager, Christchurch Press)

The registration scheme presented the police and *The Press* with a working solution to their dilemmas, particularly paving the way for the police to establish a similar ‘trust’ based relationship with the private escort market as had been established between the police and the massage parlour market. Thus, registration was presented as a voluntary process to sex workers, who had the choice of registering with the police and the ability to advertise in *The Press*, or to decide against registration and find an alternative means to access clients. Since most escort business is derived from advertisements placed in the daily newspaper (such as *The Press* which allows sex industry advertisements, making it the principal means for clients to access the escort market), registration became more of a necessary process for survival in the market.

> “You always get some who dig their toes in and say, well why should we register? and that they don’t want to be known and the bottom line is if you want to advertise, cause that’s where they get their clients from, then you’ve got to do it, it’s as simple as that.”

(Detective B, Christchurch Police)
The police stressed that registration is relatively simple and straightforward, and that it is primarily operating in the escorts' best interest, offering them protection through surveillance (Walker, 1992). The actual registration process required the escort to make an appointment to see a police officer at the station. Information concerning the escort's 'true identity' and 'work identity' was then documented such as, 'real’ and working names, date of birth, address, and telephone number to be used in the escort advertisement\textsuperscript{31}. The escort is also required to have her photograph taken for police records. The official reason given by the police for the photograph requirement cites the worker's safety and protection through surveillance. The police suggest that if workers go missing in the process of their work, then they will have the relevant personal information at hand to facilitate an investigation\textsuperscript{32}. Detective B comments:

\begin{quote}
I don't like the way that some escorts will try to side-step registration by not working for a parlour or register themselves as private escorts by working for an agency for a number of reasons. The reasons relate to safety and the knowledge of who is in the industry. We make them physically come in so we know who they are, and it also gives us a chance to talk to them and explain what our guidelines are and how they can help us and how we can help them.

(Detective B, Christchurch Police)
\end{quote}

Monitoring through this form of public-private register allows the police to establish spatial arrangements and organisational processes for locating disappearing or invisible 'populations', as well as a means for excluding undesirable 'populations' (Lyon, 2001). Through registration the police can access criminal records and police files of sex workers and their associates, enabling them to piece together networks of associations with other crimes or criminal activities which sex workers may be involved in, have knowledge of, or personal associations with (Eden, 1997). Furthermore, the police suggest that registers allow sex workers to be traced quickly if there are complaints. Detective Neale comments:

\begin{quote}
[I]he registration of sex workers is the only thing I can put on them that doesn't come back, it is the only way that I have any control over them.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{31} There is also space at the bottom of the registration form for the police to make any notes (Palmer and Reed 2001)

\textsuperscript{32} However, escorts often point out that how they look when they are working and how they look in their personal lives can be markedly different.
Thus, in this way, registration can operate as a disincentive for workers to engage in illegal activities such as theft from a client. Moreover, allowing escorts to operate 'quasi-legally' through registration, has the potential to increase interaction or information sharing between the police and sex workers. Hobbs (1988) comments that one of the easiest ways for the police to access information is by allowing individuals to continue to operate without arrest. In this way, given their ambiguous legal status, escorts can be considered to be particularly vulnerable to 'information sharing' or 'deal making' with the police. It is not surprising, therefore, that private escorts agree to register with mixed feelings. Some spoke about feeling vulnerable to the whim of the police while prostitution legislation remained in place since they essentially existed on police records as 'operating prostitutes'.

I don't like the idea of a register like that. I don't think the police have got any right to do that because there's always the possibility that they may hold it against you if something happens, you're labelled a prostitute. Do you really believe that when you give up working that they will discard your record?

(Carol, escort & parlour)

Some escorts, however, comment that they considered the informal registration scheme as being a 'trade-off' for their ability to operate freely from the suburbs. Naomi comments:

I've found the police to be supportive if you have any problems or you need to place a complaint. I had a problem with a client who was harassing me and they were on to it, quick as, I mean, they realise that the law is pretty ridiculous anyway and their job is such that they can't encourage it (prostitution), but I think that they like to make sure that we're safe.

(Naomi, escort)

Police registration can mean a partial loss of anonymity for escorts and the possibility of carrying the 'prostitute label' indefinitely. However, registers may also operate as a form of consent (a form of empowerment for sex workers) as well as a tool for (management) control (Austrin & Phibbs, 1996). Consenting to registration establishes escorts as 'quasi-legal' operators within police guidelines for operation. Police toleration of the escort
market hinged upon the ability of escorts to operate ‘discreetly’ and, therefore, minimise or avoid community opposition to their activities (see press commentaries: Aldridge, 1999; Batchelor, 2000; Prestwood, 2000). However, opponents of registration have claimed that this system is invasive and treats workers more like criminals rather than professionals. Such a ‘watchman’ or monitoring approach to policing has been claimed to go beyond the parameters of policing procedure or law enforcement via the use of informal control mechanisms for community protection, to infringe upon the liberties or privacy of individuals (Van Brunschot, 2003).

The escort registration scheme has been and continues to be a contentious issue for sex workers and the police. The NZPC argue that registration exploits the vulnerability of escorts in order for the police to achieve some semblance of containment and surveillance of the market. In their submission to the Justice and Electoral Select Committee on the Prostitution Reform Bill 2001, the Christchurch branch of the NZPC described the escort register as essentially ‘locking’ women into the industry. The NZPC further argued that the fear of disclosure to potential employers of their involvement in prostitution has deterred some sex workers from actively seeking alternative employment\(^3\). This is supported by Lyon (2001), who comments that surveillance or monitoring processes such as registration schemes can often encourage the proliferation of categories and modes of classification that turn surveillance into a central means of social ordering and, thus, reinforcement of stereotypes.

Though registration offered sex workers the relative security of a ‘quasi-legal’ status, it was nevertheless precarious and subject to changes in policing procedure and priorities. For example, in Christchurch where there was a regular three yearly turn around of officers in charge of overseeing the sex industry, escorts were aware of the possibility that the priorities and agendas of the incoming officer could differ to those of the predecessor. Detective A comments that

> \textit{All the escorts know there’s a risk, that one day I might have an operation on the escort agencies and they might get apprehended, but they know that’s the risk that comes with the job. They’ll know that if there is an operation in relation to their particular agency then it’s...}

\(^3\) This is derived from the ongoing concerns regarding the removal of workers details from the police database once they cease to work in the sex work industry.
because they've got too big or they've done something that's warranted it and they've basically got to take it on the nose, it's as simple as that.
(Detective A, Christchurch Police)

**Self-Regulation and 'Narking'**

As in the case of massage parlours, the ability of the market to self-regulate was key to the policing and operation of the escort market. The very nature of private or independent escort work is such that discretion for both the client and the sex worker is paramount. Indeed, the ability to operate 'invisibly' has often been a principal factor in the decision making process for many women to operate as private escorts. Furthermore, this form of sex work potentially offered women more autonomy over their work practice and removed the threat of third party involvement (management) in the negotiation and exchange of monies. Escorts were able to operate outside the constraints of an agency as private escorts or in co-operatives, as long as they registered with the police. Thus, to retain the ability to operate in this way with some assurance or semblance, albeit precarious, of police sanction, resulted in forms of market self-regulation. It is worth noting that it is not always the direct threat of police action that will instil candour on the part of the escort, but more often it can be fellow competitors and businesses who present a threat to the status of the escort and her ability to operate.

'Narking' has been used as a means of surveillance within the escort market just as it has been in other sex or illegal markets, with the threat of narking coming from both inside and outside the market. The precarious position of selling sex in the suburbs also means that escorts ran the risk of complaints from concerned neighbours or property owners. Thus, 'narking' to the police under the guise of a concerned neighbour was a ruse used by competitors. Co-operatives or agencies who were considered to be in competition with massage parlours were often singled out by parlour management for surveillance. Some massage parlour managers have admitted to going through the escort column in *The Press* to check which agencies and private escorts were operating, and would sometimes phone to ascertain how many people worked from one premises, the services they offered, their location, prices and so forth. Escort agencies have continued to be a thorn in the side for massage parlour management, in spite of past police crack downs to reduce the size and structure of agencies. Thus any information that parlour management received concerning 'questionable' work practice by escorts and agencies is often informally relayed back to the police. The apprehension and arrest of a Wellington escort agency owner was cited as
the result of information coming from within the industry, alerting the police to drug
offences and underage prostitution taking place on the premises of the escort agency
(Prestwood, 2000).

Private escorts working independently do not escape the scrutiny of massage parlour
management since sex workers operating between two markets can have an adverse effect
upon massage parlour business through the poaching of clientele. As a general rule,
massage parlour management try not to ‘employ’ workers who are registered as private
escorts, preferring to keep the two markets distinctly separate. Massage parlour
management try to monitor parlour workers who they suspect of working privately. This
monitoring is facilitated by ‘inside information’ or gossip passed freely within and
between parlours via various informal networks. Mimi, a shift manager, comments on the
dilemma of the two markets meeting:

\[t\]he temptation to see a client out of work is too much. A lot of these
girls will work a couple of weeks at a parlour make contact with some
regulars and give them their details outside, and then you get girls who
come to a parlour to recruit girls for their agency. You can tell when
this is going on, when your regular clientele stop coming in and these
girls stop getting requests.

(Mimi, shift manager)

Key to the continuance of an escort market is maintaining what the police call a ‘clean
market’ (Prestwood, 2000), and self-regulation of the escort market helps to ensure its
continued operation and the ‘quasi-legal’ status enjoyed by escorts. Thus, for example,
unsafe work practices, indiscriminate operations, underage prostitution, drug and organised
crime connections are monitored from within the market. Information can be passed onto
the police informally regarding suspicious work practices and criminal activities. Elaine
comments on the risks of what she and her fellow escorts in her cooperative considered to
be ‘irresponsible behaviour’ of a particular escort:

\[w\]e got to hear about this moll because that’s what she is, you know,
a moll, who was going about undercutting everyone and up to all sorts
of, you know, not using a condom and stuff, worse stuff even, off her
face most of the time. Anyway, we got this from clients and you can’t
have someone like that doing that sort of thing because then you get
people thinking that we're all like that. We don't need that sort of business, that sort of thing going on. So we, me and Jen, dobbed her into her landlord 'cos he hadn't a clue what she was up to. 34
(Elaine, escort)

Similarly, Sharpe (1998) noted in her research on street workers that workers from each 'patch' (street or area within a red light district) had their own rules and 'standards' of 'codes of conduct' concerning individual and 'professional' behaviour. Any transgression of this 'code' resulted in the circulation of rumours or gossip concerning the problematic behaviour of the particular sex worker and/or intimidation or ostracism and the creation of a hostile working environment. If these attempts failed to curtail the problematic behaviour, the women resorted to inciting police intervention with claims of 'risky' or 'unsafe' practice.

However, narking can also be used as a means of eliminating competition between escorts, or as Paula comments, "to settle old scores". Paula's experience of narking did not involve police intervention for unsafe or illegal practices as Elaine describes above, rather it involved disclosure to acquaintances, neighbours and friends the true nature of Paula's work, making her work visible. According to Paula, this disclosure was made in retaliation by a rival escort who claimed that Paula had taken a number of her regular clients with her when Paula had left the cooperative 35 where they had worked together. Paula comments:

I walked into the local [pub], just across the road, and I knew something was up by the snickering of a couple of the girls. Then one of the mouthy pricks came over to me when I was waiting at the bar and says, 'so I hear you're a proizzie then, how much for a blow job', 'do you give mates rates', you know, I got all the one liners. I just felt so humiliated, I mean it's my local and it didn't take long for it to spread around to people I didn't want to know, it just got unbearable to live around there. Once they knew what I did, people's attitudes changed towards me. It was easier to move out to somewhere else as it got to the point that they [neighbours] would come out when a client arrived and try to freak him out, you know, staring at him or call him a

34 This is one of four examples of this kind of narking recounted to me by private escorts in Christchurch
35 This is a style of work organisation in which a number of private escorts work together from a premises and share the running costs. See chapter five, page 168 for further detail.
dirty bastard or whatever. That was nothing to what I got called, and not just behind my back either.

(Paula, escort)

Paula subsequently relocated to another area of the city and changed her work details, name, telephone number and advertisements. Though in Paula's case, narking was used as a means of market and/or personal retaliation, there have been a number of occasions that workers claimed to nark as a means of safeguarding the 'professionalism' of the escort market - to expose risky or bad work practices. In such instances, the escorts suggest that such problematic behaviour threatened to expose the escort market by compromising informal arrangements that allowed the market to operate. For example, Katie a private escort working in a three woman cooperative, was informed by a couple of her clients that a cooperative in the area was operating in conjunction with one of the city massage parlours. In addition, 'the client grapevine' relayed that this cooperative had links to one of the less desirable massage parlour owners with a reputation of unsafe sex practices. Katie comments:

It pisses me off that they [parlour owners] have opened up around here. It's ok for them to do that kind of stuff in town, that's where it belongs, all the dirty girls and that. But here we're working a different way, we are running businesses here, doing things properly and discreetly and not getting anyone's back up - and I don't know how they are getting away with it. Though I don't think they'll last very long as word soon gets around what is going on there and the police will soon step in if they hear about it enough times. What worries me is if they spoil if for all of us by getting everyone's backs up.

(Katie)

The 'hidden' nature of the escort market in terms of its lack of visibility has proved problematic for the NZPC in their attempt to reach, educate and inform workers. The invisibility of the private escort market and the insularity of private escort work in general

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36 These changes had a minimal effect upon Paula's regular clientele base, with a couple of clients unable/unwilling to travel across the city to her new location. Escorts will generally advertise themselves under a couple of different names in the newspaper as a marketing ploy and clients will often phone a number of escorts to make a decision or appointment.

37 The infiltration of massage parlours into the private escort market (through the establishment of 'pseudo' cooperatives) poses a potential threat to the equilibrium of the escort market, placing strain upon police and community tolerance.
has meant that escorts often do not come into contact with other sex workers unless they actively seek out their company. Thus, in this way, the industry knowledge that is shared daily during the ‘down time’ in a massage parlour, for example (often ignored simply as gossip), is not as readily available to a private escort. Such knowledge plays an integral part in the construction of ‘professional’ work practice and identity among sex workers. The Christchurch branch of NZPC endeavour to contact private escorts if they have information to distribute to the escort market, for example, an update in the ‘ugly mugs’ book relevant to the escort market, or the latest developments with I.R.D. They do this systematically, going through the escort advertisements in the newspaper. From their point of view the escort market still largely remains isolated from active out reach work since working names can be changed on a regular basis and, therefore, it can be quite difficult to differentiate between new and regular workers when looking through the escort column of the newspaper. Though the NZPC in Christchurch tries to keep the escort market within ‘the loop’, to a large extent private escorts must instigate contact with the NZPC. A volunteer comments that:

[q]uite a lot of the time escorts don’t even want to meet each other.
(NZPC volunteer)

‘Talking Sex’

‘Live’ phone sex lines provide the opportunity for the operator and client to create a momentary relationship in which they can act out scenarios and express sexual desire and erotic fantasy. Encounters can be highly ritualistic and theatrical in terms of the emphasis on imagination, depending mostly on the labour of the mind for the purpose of sexual pleasure through masturbation (see Flowers, 1998a; Jewell, Rich & Guidroz, 2000). This lack of physical or ‘embodied’ interaction means that as a sexual service, phone sex escapes traditional legislation and regulations that govern ‘embodied’ prostitution. Thus, in the context of sex markets, phone sex is an anomaly. Hall (1995) suggests that because phone sex essentially occurs between two consenting adults and is not made available to an audience, it escapes prohibitions levied at pornography. Grabosky & Smith (1998) argue that pictorial or written depictions of sexually explicit material like those found on the Internet and World Wide Web, for example, attract more concern and condemnation than mere verbal descriptions encountered in phone sex services. That is not to say that phone sex services are an insignificant part of the sex industry since in the United States, for example, the phone sex industry is a billion dollar business that has continued to grow in
spite of efforts by telecommunication providers to regulate these services and their availability in an attempt to limit the accessibility of these services by children (Flowers, 1998a; Hall, 1995).

In New Zealand, the phone sex market is organised around local (national) private and business lines, 0900 adult information lines and international lines that are advertised locally and operate offshore from obscure Romanian states such as Moldova. As the market has been largely ignored by policy makers, there is no specific legislation involving control or containment by the police. Such regulation of phone sex business has been left to the private business sector, for example, the telecommunications supplier, advertisers, and financial organisations. Thus, operators and phone sex businesses had to negotiate often contradictory, ambiguous and morally driven mainstream work/business policies. For example, a play on ambiguity allowed individual phone sex operators and businesses to use the Telecom 0900 service in spite of Telecom business policy. This arrangement is predicated upon 'discretion', whereby Telecom New Zealand, the telecommunications supplier, 'turns a blind eye' and does not openly acknowledge the existence or operation of phone sex businesses using their 0900 services as long as these services operate discreetly without causing public complaint. Therefore, phone sex operators and businesses, like massage parlours, are required to disguise or hide the true nature of their business to secure their ability to operate their phone sex services and, thus, Telecom New Zealand is able to minimise or avoid the possibility of compromising their reputation/integrity from the association with sexually explicit services/activities (see Shopland, 1995).

For operators who do not wish to invest in the cost of setting up an 0900 service, the nature of phone sex work posed a dilemma in terms of securing a reliable method for processing and receiving payment for services. Phone sex is essentially an invisible/hidden market, in which both parties generally do not meet, shrouded by the stigma attached to the sex industry and also considered to be a more 'sleazy' form of sex work (see Flowers 1998a). In addition, many operators' work takes place within the informal economy. Thus, options for organising methods for payment are limited. For operators, this means trusting the honesty of the client to pay after the service, or invest in the cost of setting up an 0900

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38 In fact, the Prostitution Reform Act 2003 clearly states that commercial sexual services: involve physical participation by a person in sexual acts with, and for the gratification of, another person (Prostitution Reform Act 2003, part 1, (1a))

39 This option is generally used only for regular clients (see chapter six)
service\textsuperscript{40}, or negotiate with banks and credit card companies for securing a payment method. Entering into arrangements within the mainstream business sector means that operators find that they need to hide the true nature of their business to facilitate their applications for credit card payment facilities. Phone sex businesses, similar to the massage parlours and private escorts, are vulnerable to the precarious nature of operating through informal arrangements and ambiguous understandings.

\textit{0900 Operators}

Telecom New Zealand operates through an 0900 'code of practice' (see appendix 1) to monitor and regulate the use of 0900 numbers by operators or ‘information providers’ (business operators). The Telecom 'code of practice' sets out guidelines concerning the advertisement of services, the form and content of these services, and the provision of information to callers concerning the nature of the service and call charges. In addition, Telecom claims to implement a policy of sporadic/random line checks of 0900 services and requires information providers to sign a contract. This 'code of practice' is not informed by or constructed around specific legislation \textit{per se}, but, rather, is authored according to moral and ethical principles of the company and the general public (consumers). Similar to legislation governing prostitution related activities and massage parlours, the Telecom 'code of practice', belies a certain ambiguity when defining what is considered to be sexually explicit or pornographic material. For example:

\begin{quote}
sexually explicit material is only permissible when it is presented in such a way that the clear intention is to inform rather than to entertain\textsuperscript{41}.

(Telecom New Zealand 0900 Code of Practice section (e))
\end{quote}

Thus, just as ambiguous prostitution legislation enables the operation of sex businesses by selling ‘time’ rather that sexual services, phone sex operators and businesses take advantage of the ambiguity of Telecom practice guidelines and operate under the guise of ‘datelines’ or ‘chat lines’ to sell their services. In this arrangement, Telecom New Zealand has discretionary power to permit or remove 0900 services based on the company’s own understandings of what constitutes ‘too sexually explicit’. A product manager comments that

\textsuperscript{40} See chapter six.
\textsuperscript{41} Section (e) 0900 Code of Practice
[u]nder our policy of practice I believe we say that we do not allow anything of a suggestive explicit nature it may not be black and white, but that's how it is designed to be. It just comes down to whether we feel that if it's a personal call whether it breaches the policy, it tends to be a judgement call by the current, in this case it's myself or... or whoever is the product manager for 0900.

(Product Manager, Telecom 0900 Numbers)

Practical interpretations of the definitions contained in the 0900 Code of Practice such as, 'sexually explicit', 'tasteless', 'misleading manner'\(^{42}\) and so forth have largely been informed by community and market influences. For example, in 1995 Telecom New Zealand decided to suspend 0900 operations for half a dozen local companies offering sex calls or 'adult information lines' (Shopland, 1995). The justification for this censorship could be viewed as a 'knee-jerk' reaction to complaints or public concern over the 0900 services. Telecom attempts to protect its reputation as a communication company and its 'family values' rhetoric by presenting itself as refusing to tolerate the use of the 0900 service to purvey 'deliberately' salacious material (Shopland 1995). Recently, however, Telecom's approach has been more pragmatic towards the regulation of the 0900 service providers, falling in line with an approach of containment, guided by the priorities set by the current product manager of 0900 numbers. Similar to the approach taken by the police to monitor massage parlour and escort markets, Telecom opts for a supervisory role based upon 'trust' that the providers would both regulate their own businesses, and be sensitive to public/community interests or concerns regarding 0900 'sexual' services.

In addition, Telecom practised random control by checking 0900 services in unpredictable sequences. 'Checking' consisted of ringing the 0900 service providers and listening to the kind of services being offered to the caller. In addition, they monitored the advertisements for these services. However, the product manager for Telecom 0900 numbers states that, due to work load, only five to ten 0900 numbers are checked per month, and complaints from the public concerning 0900 lines are the principal source of information regarding 'misconduct' by service providers:

... with advertisements, we keep an eye on it and we're aware at the moment that there're some lines operating and probably not in
accordance with our policy. We haven’t got around to taking action against those lines but we will be doing so in the future. We do keep an eye on newspaper advertisements though and I think it would be fair to say that we don’t cover all publications regularly, like the Truth, we haven’t probably reviewed that for a couple of months now at least we tend to do things on a cyclical nature or where we’ve got a specific complaint from a member of the public.

(Product Manager Telecom 0900 Numbers)

Telecom’s approach of tolerance towards the operation of 0900 sex lines relied upon the discretion of operators and information providers in order to minimise or avoid generating complaints from the public. Though Telecom do not admit to condoning fantasy/phone sex services, the product manager for 0900 services nevertheless admits to an ‘awareness’ of their existence. Thus, lines operating discretely with ‘low key’/non-salacious advertising tend to remain a low priority for Telecom action. In this way, the regulation of the phone sex market by private companies such as Telecom, reproduces the surveillance model practised by the police for the escort and massage parlour markets. They operate through a form of informal ‘understandings’ or ‘indulgency’ organisational arrangements (Tilly and Tilly, 1998) based upon situational rather than policy guidelines.

Operators use a number of strategies to safeguard their 0900 service from public complaints or the ‘random’ Telecom checks. Anya, for example, claims that the simplest way to avoid unwanted attention from Telecom checks and general public complaints, is to offer her 0900 number to regular clients as an alternative payment method, using her private number for advertisements and initial contact:

*I have to be very careful because Telecom, well you’re not supposed to have a sexy line through 0900, like I don’t advertise the 0900 number and then I can have control over who rings it. I can give the 0900 number to regular callers. Some guys don’t have a credit card and some of them don’t want to use their credit card and some of them just want to have a quick call, but you have to be very careful because of Telecom. Some girls will blatantly advertise their 0900 number, but I want to keep mine so I use it selectively”*

(Anya)

42 see appendix
Similarly, Cleo, an independent operator in the Wellington area, initiated calls through a private number. However, Cleo used a recorded message to greet and direct clients to ring her 0900 number for a ‘live’ service. Cleo’s recorded message does not explicitly describe the service available on the 0900 service, but her subtle use of innuendoes and breathless whisper served to give clues to the kind of service that was on offer. Larry, who operated a number of 0900 lines from Auckland, ‘contracted’ approximately thirty women to operate these lines on a twenty-four hour basis. Larry circumvented Telecom policy and community watchdogs by advertising these services as ‘datelines’, instructing his operators to allow the caller to ‘lead’ the call initially. He refers to this process as ‘padding’ the call. ‘Padding’ is a strategy used by phone sex businesses and operators to keep callers on line to bolster their revenue since calls are charge by the minute. Padding also provides the operator with the opportunity to determine the kind of service the caller requires, and allow time to strike up a rapport. Operators are warned to be cautious at the beginning of each call and to avoid ‘leading’ the call just in case the call is being monitored by Telecom. Larry comments:

"...with fantasy lines, they're not all dirty talk as I explain to my staff, that they're not all dirty talk, right. You might get some people who are lonely for some reason or another that need the company and a lot of girls say that they take on the role of counsellor in this business sometimes ... and some of the time you will get the callers that want to talk dirty ... and when I take an operator on I will always say that we will keep it to strict adult fun. So you know what two consenting adults do or talk about is their own private business and the key is two consenting adults, they both have to want it. See what I mean?"

(Larry)

Information providers are required as part of their agreement with Telecom 0900 numbers to provide callers with a brief message at the beginning of each call, describing the nature of the service. This gives callers the opportunity to find out about the type of service and the price of a call, to provide the caller with the opportunity to proceed with or terminate the call without being charged. Larry comments:

"[c]alls have to have a message at the beginning with the name of the company, which is, for example, Dateline, the cost of the calls which..."
are $4.99 or whatever per minute, and no children please. You know they need to get permission from their parents to make the call and if you don’t hang up you will be charged for the call. Bang and they are given that amount of time to make the decision whether they want to continue and that takes about 10 seconds”

(Larry)

The fees for 0900 services are set by the information provider within Telecom’s framework of call charges. Calls can be charged from 99c to $10 per minute including GST or capped charges to a maximum of $50 per call including GST (set fee). Larry charged different fees for his 0900 services lines as part of his marketing strategy. His charges began from $2.99 upwards, with the average call costing $4.99 per minute. Anya, on the other hand, preferred to keep the cost of her 0900 calls below $2.99 per minute since her 0900 service had to compete with her own credit card charge of $15 for 10 minutes. 0900 calls are charged directly to the Telecom account of the user and, therefore, debt collection is the responsibility of Telecom. In this way, Telecom operated as an additional party in the client/sex worker relationship. Thus, the 0900 service not only removed the headache of acquiring a credit card processing facility, or establishing an alternative means of payment collection, but was also claimed to be a lucrative venture for operators through the ease in which payment and access to phone sex operators that 0900 numbers provided.

**Business line/Home line Operators**

Independent phone sex operators also used private and business lines from their homes as a means to provide phone sex services. Some of these independent operators ‘sub-contracted’ work on a pay per call basis and/or when needed, with the amount determined by the time segment that the client purchased. A major dilemma for home-line operators is the issue of securing a reliable method of payment for phone sex services. Operators find that their services often conflict with the morally guided principles of financial organisations such as banks and credit card companies, resulting in a negative response to their applications for credit card facilities. Thus, operators used a ‘pseudo business’ when submitting applications. For example, Ruby gained credit card processing facilities for her phone sex business by masquerading as a secretarial business as a result of being refused by a number of banks. Similarly, Caroline had her phone sex business listed as Auto

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43 This however, can be disadvantageous if callers are disconnected by Telecom and payments for outstanding balances cannot be recovered.
Supplies in order to circumvent potential problems. Though phone sex is not defined as prostitution by current legislation, it is nevertheless often associated with pornography and, as such, is stigmatised through the moral and deviance discourses associated with prostitution and pornography (Flowers, 1998a). Thus, operators often claimed to experience prejudice and be subject to moral judgements when dealing with mainstream businesses and financial institutions.

In Wellington, phone sex operators have been categorised as sex workers by the daily newspapers (the Dominion and the Evening Post) and are, therefore, required to 'register' with the police before they may place an advertisement in these newspapers. The procedure of registration is similar to that for private escorts, in that operators must submit personal details for police records; however, they are not required to have a photograph taken. The Dominion and Evening Post will only accept advertisements for the Adult Information columns when they receive confirmation of registration from the police.

We do have to have a police check just like the escorts do so that I can advertise in the Dominion. So I have to be registered and the detective did say to me that he is not really worried about the fantasy phone calls, and apart from that I haven't really had to consort with anybody.

(Anya)

Yeah we have to register with the police, the CIB does it and I was surprised that that's what they waste their time on. And all you have to do is fill in a form stating what you're going to do and what you're going to advertise, your name and address and just a signature and, well, all of us had to do it, all the ladies that are working but we didn't have to take our photo though, and then they look you up on the computer to make sure that you haven't got a warrant out on you or something like that, and that's basically it.

(Caroline)

So far, this policy of informal registration for phone sex operators has been specific only to the Wellington phone sex market. The introduction of informal registration for phone sex operators (business line/home line operators) in Wellington effectively problematises

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44 Though The Press has been operating a similar policy for private escorts in Christchurch, no decision has been made to extend this option to phone sex operators.
the phone sex market and possibly paves the way for further informal regulation or monitoring as the market increases and diversifies. In the U.S., for example, phone sex services have diversified in line with demand and competition from 'online' or Internet services (Flowers, 1998a; Hall, 1995). The development of digital technology and the introduction of G3 and WAP mobile phones has opened up new possibilities for phone sex services to include visually interactive calls. This advance in technology raises the question of how to regulate such services that clearly exhibit characteristics of the pornography market and, indeed, who would monitor or regulate these services.

Actions on the part of the government, industry or the general public to control 'objectionable' telecommunications may succeed in part, but may also produce unintended consequences which may not be beneficial, and which may worsen the situation. Such consequences may entail over-reaction on the part of authorities affecting less innocuous telecommunication service providers, or typically, subversion by the targets of regulatory intervention. Therefore, control over telecommunications content seems destined to remain an elusive goal (Grabosky & Smith, 1998). Limited resources available to law enforcement in this area of sex work have seen the risk presented by phone sex becoming the responsibility of the telecommunications company. Detective B comments that

"It's an area that's non illegal, nothing whatsoever to regulate it and no registration to cover operations either. I would actually prefer to have the whole lot lumped in and I also include strip clubs and stuff like that. I'm more interested in the exploitation aspect of it, not because it is the sex industry. If someone chooses to work in the sex industry then that's fine, but if they are being forced into anything then that should be the theme for policing and not the fact that they are working in it and that's how we generally approach it in Christchurch. We are not here to charge people or whatever, but we are here for the exploitation side of it."

(Detective B, Christchurch Police)

45 The German authorities in 1995 prevailed upon Compuserve (an online service provider) to block access to sexually explicit newsgroups (approximately 200). It was not technically possible at this time to block access form Germany only. Thus, access to the newsgroups was denied to 4 million Compuserve users worldwide. Furthermore this had the effect of blocking commentary and material on sex education and pornography censorship from sources such as the Vatican (Grabosky & Smith, 1998).
Conclusion

State policy approaches to prostitution are not easily summarised or interpreted. They appear contradictory by embracing notions derived from 'liberal humanist' philosophies about the sexual rights of individuals yet simultaneously asserting that certain sexual activities are morally unacceptable (Hubbard, 1999). Over the last few decades, prostitution reform has been increasingly scripted in terms of 'rights' discourses which have argued that prostitution per se should not be criminalised, using the argument that it is a consensual private arrangement between buyer and seller. However, discourses pointing to prostitution as being exploitative, immoral and debasing remain important and continue to inform policy making, like that operating in Sweden and the retention of criminal laws pertaining to prostitution in the U.K., Canada and, indeed, New Zealand can still be included here. Yet where there appears to have been greater space for pragmatic solutions, such as in the Netherlands, these solutions have been more open to sex worker discourse.

In situations where the sex work industry is highly developed and differentiated, there are pressures for both greater control and greater liberalisation. Thus, a multi-agency approach to the regulation of sex markets is often adopted with legislation setting the framework to work within (Hubbard, 1999; Marchand et al., 1998; West, 2000). Although a multi-agency approach to policing or regulating sex markets can be beneficial for sex workers and businesses, it can also highlight struggles and competing interests of 'collaborative groups. For example, the interests and agendas of prostitutes' collectives can often clash or contrast sharply with more ideologically credible community groups representing neighbourhood interests (or claim to do so) and municipal councils (West, 2000: 109). Evidence of this can be seen in the struggle over 'toleration zones' as different constituencies argue about prostitution's impact on the quality of life in their areas.

The experiments in prostitution policy in the Netherlands, NSW and Victoria illustrate that the inclusion of a work approach to prostitution law reform can result in a new set of problems with regard to managing working conditions and the control of workplaces. When prostitution was illegal, the dominant social control agency was the police. However, when prostitution is decriminalised or legalised issues of occupational health and safety are left to governmental departments, community, health and prostitute groups (Zajdow, 1992). The bureaucratic realities of law reform involve diverse views, competing interests and often impractical measures to regulate the occupational risks of sex work (Hunter, 1992; Outshoorn, 2001).
The diversity of sex markets makes it impractical for the implementation of a universal piece of prostitution legislation. Thus, as I have demonstrated in the New Zealand case, the regulation or containment of sex businesses is often shared between community groups, businesses and government departments, in addition to the police. Media businesses, for example, have the ability to intervene in sex workers' and sex business' access to clients through the regulation of advertising. This can be seen in the case of the private escort and phone sex markets in New Zealand which rely principally upon newspaper advertisements as a means to initiate contact between clients and sex workers.

In New Zealand, the ‘practical’ and ‘effective’ regulation of prostitution has presented a number of dilemmas for state policy makers and the police. The diversity of the sex markets that make up the sex work industry has not been captured in legislative regulations aimed at controlling sex work. These formal controls have largely failed to take into account the innovation and ‘cunning’ of sex workers and businesses nor the particular organisation of each market. In addition, such punitive legislative controls such as those aimed at solicitation, brothel-keeping and procurement have been informed by moral discourse and relied heavily upon conventional police surveillance of the industry (Jordan, 1992b; Knight, 1987; Robinson, 1987; Sullivan, 1997). The redefinition of ‘policing’ prostitution has seen the incorporation of a more flexible or pragmatic approach with the inclusion of community bodies and agendas in the interpretation and application of formal and informal regulative procedures. This re-definition involves the development of informal strategies for dealing with different sex markets, increased liberalisation of sexual discourses, the politicization of prostitutes’ rights groups such as the NZPC, and increased visibility of the sex industry.

This more pragmatic approach to policing prostitution characterises the relationship developed between the sex businesses, sex workers and regional police departments, in which the responsibility for policing became increasingly shared within the local community. This has seen a shift from the surveillance of markets based on the administration of legislation to an approach of supervision, the delegation of responsibilities and encouragement of market self-regulation. ‘Effective’ regulation of the diverse sex markets has hinged upon informal alliances, networks, and arrangements based upon trust, competition and collaboration, with prostitution legislation initially setting out the broad framework for the organisation of sex markets. However, since these markets
can vary markedly in their organisation, work practice and spatial location, informal policing procedure and policy does not cover all of this diversity.

On June 27 2003, prostitution in New Zealand was decriminalised. Like other countries that have followed this same path, the decriminalisation approach has also incorporated a number of regulations requiring the involvement of regional local bodies to monitor sex businesses. For local councils this raises issues such as ‘zoning’ and the dilemmas associated with it for both visible forms of sex work, such as street work, as well as the invisible forms such as escorts. It is possible that escort work will remain outside the boundaries of legal activities, as a result of the location of their businesses in residential areas. For example, the local council in Christchurch has made it clear that they do not intend to tolerate the continuance of commercial sex businesses operating in residential areas (NZPC personal communication). Similarly, brothels and escorts in New South Wales occupy a ‘legal grey area’ whereby permission to operate is based upon their ability to operate discreetly without incurring complaints from local residents (O’Rourke & Nicholls, 2003; Sullivan, 1997). Though the small ‘owner-operated brothels’ are not required to apply for a license/certificate of operation, it remains to be seen whether or not individual escorts will be required to continue to register in order to be able to advertise their services in the newspapers.

The Prostitution Reform Act 2003 is in the early stages of its application, and the experiences of other countries indicate that law reform entails a highly complex process that requires a re-negotiation of relationships and alliances, and a re-allocation of policing responsibilities that fall in line with the diversity of sex markets and community needs. The cases of Netherlands, Australia, and the UK indicate that the regulation of prostitution is often a combination of decriminalisation, legalisation and criminalisation. Though the containment of sex work in New Zealand has formally been one of criminalisation, it has, as I have argued, effectively exhibited characteristics of what Weitzer terms, ‘de facto decriminalisation’ (1999) and legalisation through the establishment of informal arrangements or ‘sanctions’, and the involvement of peripheral groups in the policing of sex work. What has emerged is an approach of supervision predicated on trust and self-regulation of markets. This approach has now been further ‘tested’ by a formal decriminalisation bill, but it remains to be seen how this will operate. The shift away from the ambiguous and informal arrangements described may well have consequences not
foreseen by the advocates of greater liberalization. The following chapters will further explore the organisation of these three markets and consider how the combination of formal legislative regulations and informal policing procedure have affected how sex work is practiced, negotiated and understood.

46 This is considered by the local council to be more than two sex workers. This is in spite of the Prostitution Reform Act 2003 defining 'owner-operated brothels' as consisting of no more than 4 sex workers (Part 1, Section 4.)
The mundane daily rituals of work practice, schedules of sex work and sex work businesses are largely ignored in prostitution research literature. In place of accounts of how sex work is socially organised in general, prostitution literature is characterised by a discourse on the sale of sex and the dyadic relationship between sex worker and client (O'Connell Davidson, 1995; Perkins, 1994; Robinson, 1987), exploitation of sex work (Høigard & Finstead, 1992; O'Connell Davidson, 1998), health (McKeganey & Bamard, 1996; Plumridge & Chetwynd, 1996), prostitution legislation (Jordan, 1992b; Neave, 1994; Robinson, 1987; Skilbrei, 2001; Sullivan, 1997; Weitzer, 2000), and identity (Bell, 1994; Carpenter, 2000; Chapkis, 1996; O'Neill, 2001; Phoenix, 1995, 1999). In this chapter, I will argue that paying attention to the details of the social organisation of work in massage parlours brings management (rather than clients) and the key issue of time into focus.

The conflict between management and workers over schedules or shift rosters is structured by problems of managerial control that are common to all workplaces. Massage parlour management is faced with a continual struggle to overcome and control the unpredictability and unreliability of workers who do not always turn up to work or, if they do, attempt to leave before the end of the designated shifts. The peculiarity of the massage parlour as an institution is that management are compelled to devise ways to discipline workers who have neither legally binding employment contracts nor obligation to the business because of legislation that governs the operation of massage parlours (the Massage Parlours Act 1978). Managers are constrained by their recognition that both the job and service performed by sex workers contravenes legislation for prostitution related activities and, therefore, they have no control over the sex workers’ work. The solution for massage parlour management is to attempt to control workers' time. Through the enforcement of timetables and/or schedules, a system of control is constructed in which it is time not sex
that is sold. This mechanism both circumnavigates legislation regulating prostitution related activities and provides for the peculiar form of organisation of massage parlours. My discussion will therefore follow the conflict or negotiation over time, how it is controlled, bargained, sold, negotiated, and allocated.

Material for the chapter was collected from massage parlours in Christchurch over a five year period. It incorporates my own experience of working in a massage parlour as a receptionist and shift manager as well as the experiences and stories of sex workers, managers, receptionists, owners and clients that I have interviewed, worked with and met through social networks. This chapter looks specifically at Christchurch massage parlours; however, the transient nature of sex work means that many of the participants have worked in other cities in New Zealand and three of the women mentioned have experience working overseas in Australia, England and North America. My own experience of working as a manager in a massage parlour first took place at Studio 14B, an upmarket, centrally located parlour. I remained there for almost two and a half years before leaving and have since worked at Dior’s, a middle range massage parlour located on the perimeter of the four avenues (central city area) of Christchurch.

Furthermore, Tilly and Tilly (1998) argue that ‘[a]lthough an employer may have the power to write rules, enforcing their implementation is something else again’ (92). Employers and workers almost invariably have conflicting objectives in terms of work practice. Therefore ‘bargaining’ between employers and workers often takes place in which the parties exchange rewards, punishments, threats or promises, contingent on agreements regarding work performance (Tilly & Tilly, 1998). This ‘bargaining’ forms a set of informal arrangements that are relied upon to get work done (see Tilly & Tilly, 1998; Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999).

'Parlour Time'

"Most of the massage parlours started out as straight places like this place was like a gym, spa and massage place. The girls working in them got paid, and yes of course there were the odd couple of places where the girls would do extras, but in general if you got caught you

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1 My position as a shift manager/receptionist at two Christchurch massage parlours Studio 14B and Dior's) over 6 years, enabled me access to the locales of sex work and the flows of sex workers' conversations that sustained them, and allowed me to assemble connections/networks within the sex industry which provided access to other sex markets. My role of researcher and participant in this study is explored in detail in the Methodology Appendix (see p257)
got fired. Mind I’m talking about way back in the early days and that’s going back about, well, more than twenty-five years now, when a massage parlour was where you got a spa and a massage”
(Coral, parlour worker and receptionist)

The massage parlour is a peculiar institution. Though management will often talk about their businesses as ‘normal’, it is difficult to view a massage parlour as ‘just a normal business’, not simply because of the sexual services that are available for purchase, but because of their precarious legal status. Massage parlours are prohibited from formally ‘employing’ or contracting workers and openly advertising their sexual services. They must sell ‘time’ rather than sexual services. Furthermore, the organisation of massage parlours is subject to the manifestations of the stigma associated with prostitution, such as negative publicity and public image, which views prostitution as inevitably linked with drugs and exploitation and organised crime.

This problem of stigma, being both a 'normal' and stigmatised business, is understood by parlour managers to promote both employment and marketing problems. For example, Karen speaks about the employment issue:

"We have a pretty successful business, yeah a successful business. It's a nice place, nice premises, nice ladies, nice receptionists, a nice place and we've worked hard to try and get rid of the idea of sleaze that's always associated with massage parlours. A lot of the girls are quite surprised when they come to work for us that it's not like the places they've worked before, and most of them enjoy being here, and that's important otherwise you're going to have staffing problems and in this business that's a big problem. It's probably that we've got standards, but we are relaxed. We're not ruthless and we're not too hard. Overall, it is pretty good here compared to other places.
(Karen, parlour manager)

In addition, management has also sought to reinvent themselves as ‘adult entertainment’ in order to resolve employment standards. This has involved reassessing their approach to
sex work, and reaffirming their resolve to disassociate themselves from the stereotypical image of prostitution. Consequently, massage parlours have embraced a more client-centred approach to marketing their services, presenting clients with an ‘all round experience’, creating and catering for niche markets offering specialist services, or offering discount prices in the ‘main’ market.

*The way I look at is, I’m a box salesman. My job is to sell boxes. This is all about money, babe. We are making money here. You make totals and profit rates, we’re making money. You need to promote what you are selling well, market yourself to the very best that you can. Whether I’m a gym instructor or a parlour boss it’s all the same, same shit different bucket. You just have to break through the bullshit and that means running a tight ship.*

(Eric, parlour manager)

The issue of controlling sex workers, or ‘running a tight ship’ as Eric suggests, involves - as in any normal business - accounting for how money is earned and how time is spent. However, unlike businesses that count their labour costs in man-hours (and pay their labour by the hour, week or month, calculating their profit in reference to the number of workers employed), massage parlours are more like those service organisations that are characterised by the employment of non-professional workers. Similarly, like the workers employed in those organisations, massage parlour workers operate within irregular if not totally self determined, temporal patterns (Hassard 2000). Hassard includes the emergency services, police and maintenance crews in this category (2000). Following on from Hassard, I will suggest that sex workers, like the workers in those service occupations, present particular and difficult problems for management control.

These problems of control arise as a consequence of what I call ‘parlour time(s)’. These times incorporate a multiple complexity of times. They include both paid and unpaid time but, more significantly, the times generated out of the complex overlay of work patterns and practices, of relations between the workers within the massage parlour, as well as the relations between workers and clients and other external agents like the police, NZPC volunteers, contract cleaners, snack/food vendors and so forth. These external actors or support personnel (Becker 1982) engage with both the management and workers and are fundamental for the overall functioning of the massage parlour.
While, formally, time in a workplace is generally organised and used by management in such a way as to achieve a high degree of efficiency and productivity, clock-time provides a common organising framework to synchronise activities and also commodify labour (Hassard 2000, Adam 1993). The complexity of parlour times flows from the fact that sex workers are neither employees of a massage parlour nor wholly free-lance. This condition, which - following Felstead - I will refer to as a version of the controlled self, operates to undo management's attempts at ordering. In turn, this leads massage parlour management to supplement their use of timetables or schedules as a means of structuring and controlling the activities of the workforce by more coercive means such as fines\(^2\).

The contested temporal order of the workplace that emerges out of this conflictual field of control (in massage parlours) comes to serve simultaneously as a template for organising both important features of the workers' behaviour and as a management project concerned with constructing some form of commitment to the parlour. In both cases, workers and managers are also provided with their own 'interpretative framework for rendering their actions in the setting meaningful' (Barley, 1988: 125). In this context, in which workers are neither employees of a massage parlour nor wholly free-lance, their adherence to work policy can be problematic, and ensuring some form of commitment to the business can be extremely difficult from management's point of view. Herein lies the dilemma for massage parlour management, how to extract some form of commitment from these workers.

**Extracting Commitment - Disciplining Workers**

The staff in a massage parlour are generally made up of waged, contract or informal employees (receptionists, managers, cleaners etc.) and unwaged staff (sex workers). The latter are neither 'employed' nor 'contracted' workers and, therefore, occupy an ambiguous status. From the management's point of view, it means that they face the problem of getting sex workers (who are essentially 'free-lance' and prefer to operate according to notions of free market labour) to follow or adhere to a bureaucratic system of organising labour (timetables and shifts). From the sex workers' point of view, it means that they

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\(^2\) O'Connell Davidson (1998) argues that deviance or the illegality of sex work activities per se encourages owners/managers to adopt strict disciplinary procedures as a means to maximise throughput in brothels (see chapter one). Though this can in part account for the adoption of disciplinary approaches in New Zealand massage parlours, I would also argue that this illegality/discipline link/representation does not explain/explore the peculiarities of the diverse sex markets and the parallels between massage parlour work and mainstream freelance or contingent workers.
receive no remuneration for the hours that they spend waiting for work or indeed for the 
massage that they are obliged to provide during the client encounter. Thus, sex workers’ 
time at work is experienced not as continuous employment but, rather, as blocks of time 
(see Harvey, 1999) or the number of clients (jobs) that they process. This experience, 
however, conflicts with the system of organisation that massage parlour management use to 
co-ordinate their work, such as timetables and shifts, requiring workers to be present for 
the duration of a shift.

Massage parlour managers and receptionists often claim that sex workers can be the 
biggest obstacle for the success and 'smooth running' of a massage parlour and yet they are 
the core of the business. Barley (1988) suggests that the construction of a timetable of 
expected events and required behaviours is one of the first steps in sense making when 
confronted with ambiguity in the work place. He argues that the temporal order of the 
workplace serves simultaneously as a template for organising behaviour as well as an 
interpretative framework for rendering action in the setting meaningful (Barley, 1988). 
Extracting some form of work commitment from massage parlour workers, getting them to 
turn up for designated shifts and turn up on time has become a daily issue for 
management. Bev, the manager and licensee of Dior’s comments:

{one of my headaches is getting staff, and getting staff to turn up to turn up on time, be ready for the beginning of the shift and not turning up at the start and then wandering off to get changed and end up half an hour later. I want some respect for the job, turn up for a start. I mean there are some days when I should have five girls on and only two will turn up and so it’s a case of ringing around trying to get replacements at the last minute. Which job would allow you to get away with that? 
(Bev, parlour manager)

Bev’s experience is not unique. Managers and owners often comment that they find it a 
constant struggle to maintain a regular staff of sex workers and extract what they consider 
to be a reasonable standard of work behaviour and commitment. A sample of massage 
parlour management commented that out of their entire staff, approximately 40% of these
workers will stay loyal to the business while the others will come and go. Thus, faced with the task of organising an essentially transient, free-lance, contingent (non-standard work) staff, management/owners use a mixture of standard work and bonded labour procedures in a massage parlour in order to establish some form of temporal order/framework. Thus, management devise disciplinary strategies involving intervention in the ability of the worker to make money (allocation of shifts and dismissal) or the removal of monies (fines and bonds) in an attempt to get workers to adhere to time frames and work policies. Karen comments:

\[w[e ask top dollar here so we expect our girls to be worth it, to have a professional approach, turn up for their shifts and do a good job. But that doesn’t always happen and so you’ve got to try and make it happen.\]

(Karen, parlour manager)

As a result of the unusual nature of sex work and the ambiguity of the 'employer/employee' relationship in a massage parlour, management find that they must introduce more 'basic' or less sophisticated methods to penalise/control. For example, written and verbal warnings are ineffective in the absence of employment contracts. Eric comments:

\[y]eah we impose fines for not turning up. You know, the no call no show, that sort of thing. I’d really rather not, but it’s just a fact of life that working girls are basically unreliable sometimes.\]

(Eric, parlour manager)

The fining of workers can vary between parlours and can be implemented for various misdemeanours. For example, at Studio 14B workers are fined $20 for turning up late, and $100 for failing to notify management of their impending absence from the shift. Similarly, at Dior's, workers are fined $20 for turning up late and $50 for not turning up to a shift at all and failing to notify the management. However, the imposition of the fine in itself is not a sufficient deterrent. The manager/receptionist must also devise ways in which to collect the fines from workers. This is done by intervening in the exchange of monies

\[3\text{ Over two thirds of the operating massage parlours in Christchurch.}\]

\[4\text{ Workers were also required to produce a doctor's certificate.}\]
between client and sex worker, through the promotion of the all-inclusive fee/service. In this way, management negotiate and receive monies on behalf of the sex workers and, thus, are able to subtract monies owed to the parlour. Most massage parlours offer the client the option of door fee ('massage time' only) or an all-inclusive fee (this includes the massage fee/door fee and a 'full service'). In both cases, the client pays a fee for a time segment, generally half hour, three quarters of an hour or a full hour. The all-inclusive is roughly divided so that there is a minimal reduction in door charge and more of a reduction of the worker's fee. Thus, the all-inclusive can be used as a safety measure by massage parlours to ensure that fines are paid in addition to the weekly costs that workers must pay to work in a massage parlour, such as shift fees and advertising costs.

Similarly, management can intercept the exchange of monies between client and sex worker when payment for 'extras' is made by credit card or eftpos (electronic bank charge). These payments are processed through the massage parlour's credit card/eftpos facility. Payment arrangements to the workers are then made at the discretion of management. For example, at Studio 14B, credit card payments were distributed to workers at the beginning of the financial week, and eftpos monies were paid strategically at the end of a shift, not only as a means to retrieve monies owed, but also as a means to keep workers on the premises till the end of the shift. Some massage parlours have been known to operate a policy to keep any eftpos or credit card payments as a form of 'bond' to cover fines, shift fees and advertising fees accrued for the duration of a worker's employment. Karen comments:

\[
\text{[w]e generally keep all credit card payments that the ladies receive in a sort of account. It goes towards their advertising and shift fees, so they are always going to be in credit, and they get whatever is left over when they leave. It's just our way of getting the fees otherwise you just end up keep chasing them around and around.}
\]

\[5\] The 'all-inclusive' is available in the majority of parlours in Christchurch. A couple of massage parlours operate exclusively with all-inclusive fees.

\[6\] Some massage parlours will advertise the all-inclusive as a 'full-service' or 'the ladies time' with the understanding that this will be a 'full service'. The definition of a 'full-service' can vary between parlours and between management and workers (which will be discussed later in the chapter). However, the general assumption is that it includes: hand and oral stimulation and sexual intercourse. This is not advertised to the client, however, the receptionist/manager will insinuate subtly as to the nature of the service for clients who are not familiar with this form of payment/service.

\[7\] The 'all-inclusive' can also be used as a means to 'control' clients. I often promote the all-inclusive to draw-in uncertain or nervous clients (Often the prospect of negotiating with the worker in the room can be daunting), or for clients who present the potential to be difficult when negotiating the 'extras' in the room.
Sex workers have often been required to pay a bond to work in a massage parlour. The bond is used to recover any fines or fees owed to the management if a worker decides to move onto another work venue without giving notice to management. To a certain extent the bond serves to ‘tie’ (bond) the worker to a particular business, thus providing some semblance of security against the transient nature of sex workers. At Studio 14B, for example, the bond was mandatory and workers were charged $200. The shift manager deducted monies for the bond from all-inclusive, credit card and eftpos monies at a minimum rate of $20 per shift, or calculated according to the number of ‘jobs’ that a worker processed on a shift. The bond is generally returned when the worker ceases to be ‘employed’ at the establishment. However, this process of bonding workers can be open to abuse by management, leaving very little recourse for the recovery of the money for workers. Rochelle comments on her experience:

"In one place where I worked I had all this built up credit card money and when I left I had a big spat with the manager and owner because they didn’t want to give me my credit card money and it was like something like $600 or something. I did manage to get it back in the end ... and the scary thing is that they can withhold the money if they want to and there’s nothing to stop them from doing that and nothing you can really do to get the money back if they don’t want to give it to you. I was lucky. They used to use the credit card money to make sure that you paid your fees and I guess you just stayed there until you used it up and it’s like a way of making sure that you stay in one place and to stop you from jumping from parlour to parlour. It’s a fact, girls go with the money, go to the busier places. I mean, it makes sense that you want the best deal for what you’re doing, but they didn’t want you doing that.

(Rochelle)

Shift allocation is another means by which management can impact upon a worker’s ability to derive an income and is, thereby, a means to discipline workers. Often particular shifts

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8. At Dior’s both credit card and eftpos monies are distributed weekly.
in a massage parlour can be more lucrative than others. Of course, this can vary somewhat between massage parlours, but a general rule is that Thursday, Friday, and Saturday night shifts are potentially lucrative and busy. Generally, the allocation for the most lucrative shifts is based upon the reliability, punctuality, 'good work attitude' and request rate of a worker. However, in practice, shift allocation in massage parlours often must come down to providing clients with a variety of body types to choose from rather than as a means to discipline workers, since it is important for parlours to have sufficient numbers of women on a shift. Thus, as a disciplinary measure, shift allocation is only effective in massage parlours that have an abundance of staff and can boast potentially lucrative shifts.

Similarly, the dismissal of staff can only be effective in the more exclusive or sought after establishments that can offer workers a high standard of clientele, income and working environment. In these establishments, management generally have no need to enter into reciprocal relationships with workers to ensure that they have a full staff selection for their clientele. Catherine comments:

\[
\text{[most of this type of place tends to have a core group of girls who have been there a long time and they know that if you fuck up then you are out and you are not allowed back and you find out that once you are gone that it wasn't such a bad place to work 'cos other places put financial pressure on you to do things that you are not personally disposed to doing. So there's control.]} \\
\text{(Catherine, parlour worker)}
\]

Furthermore, the withdrawal of the offer of employment as a means of disciplinary action lacks effect among workers who do not receive the benefits of the status of an employee. Up-market establishments that can offer workers a good and professional working environment and a guaranteed income can afford to be selective in the recruitment of staff, and will subject candidates to a rigorous interview in order to acquire workers who can maintain the parlour's standards. Sarah comments:

\[
\text{[In my experience, I found that in addition to these nights some of the day shifts would be equally busy. At Studio Studio 14B Tuesday and Thursday day shifts can be busy, whereas at Dioris, Wednesday and Friday day shifts prove to be more lucrative. These variations can be due to a number of factors such as, timetables of regular clientele, location of the massage parlour, fees or specials, advertising, the number and type of sex workers on each shift and so forth.]} \\
\]
[t]heir presentation must be immaculate. I send them home if their appearance is below standard. If they come in and their clothes are wrinkled, they are not allowed to wear it. If they come in and something is a bit torn then they are expected to have it repaired before they can wear it. Make-up, hair, matching lingerie, they must have at least two sets with them. You know there are certain elements of behaviour that we simply don't tolerate and I hate to say it, but there are certain types of lady that we wouldn't even consider having working here.

(Sarah, parlour manager and B&D mistress)

Flexible Time
It has been suggested that the lack of commitment that sex workers exhibit to the work ethics or policy of a massage parlour is the result of the stigma attached to sex work (Phoenix, 1999). Unlike the situation in the U.K., New Zealand massage parlour workers are operating in essentially ‘quasi-legal’ businesses informally sanctioned by the police. Their work, however, is burdened with the stigma attached to prostitution and the legislative regulations that formally render their work illegal. Phoenix (1999) argues that the social stigma attached to sex work can prevent workers from acting as 'stable' employees. Indeed, the social and emotional stress of sex work, performing sexual acts with different men, dealing with feelings of attraction, revulsion and indifference can prove difficult and distasteful for many workers during their careers (see McKeganey & Barnard, 1996; O'Connell Davidson, 1998; O'Neill, 2001; Phoenix, 1999). Thus, for this reason, many workers opt to work on a casual or part-time basis, turning up to a shift when they need the money or can cope with working again. Trish comments:

[you know, a lot of these girls have never had jobs before, anywhere. They don’t understand the responsibilities of working and this is where the problem comes in. They only know what they hear you know, ah dirty hookers, dirty whores. They don’t see it as a normal job, a job that you have to turn up to on time, be reliable, be responsible, do the work and then at the end of the day you can go home, and you know that you’ve done your job well. It can be treated like any other job, if you set your mind to it.

(Trish, receptionist/parlour worker)
This conflict over time and punctuality between sex workers and parlour management stems largely from both the differing practices and ideas of sex work organisation that are brought together in a massage parlour. For example, management prefer to operate under a bureaucratic form of organisation with a hierarchical structure of management, shifts and rosters (timetabled). Workers however, tend to calculate their time and work in terms of 'jobs' (clients) that they process, preferring to operate according to a free-lance system or free market system. However, both workers and management recognise the need for structure as well as a certain amount of flexibility for the organisation of sex work in a massage parlour. What results is a system whereby sex workers tend to work both with and against the structures set in place by management, to produce a pattern of working that suits their own work practice and rhythm. In turn, massage parlour management subvert work place policy and 'indulge' workers where necessary in order to achieve work arrangements that suit their business objectives. This can be seen in terms of the organisation of opening and closing hours of the parlour\textsuperscript{10}

Management and workers will compromise and oscillate between their different notions of organisation, swinging between bureaucratic and free market approaches. For example, management will exhibit a certain amount of flexibility by allowing some workers to start and finish their shifts at specific times other than the fixed shift hours for childcare, family or work obligations. Thus, not all activities and organisational structure can be reducible to tight specifications, such as time frames and schedules and allotted tasks (Hassard, 2000). Following on, Hassard suggests that often implicit working norms or patterns will emerge in response to organisational controls that may eventually become translated into explicit rules or standard operating procedures (1989; 2000 see also Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999).

Sex work practice and patterns are subject to a variety of influences. These include, for example, market demand for services, peer pressure (informal codes of practice among sex workers), management expectations (e.g. all-inclusive service, work place regulations),

\textsuperscript{10} Massage parlours do often exercise a certain amount of flexibility in terms of their closing hours which can be seasonal whereby at certain times of the year there is a 'lull' in the market or influenced by public holidays or regional events such as rugby games. Some massage parlours are open 24 hours, but the majority tend to close at their own discretion, this is determined by the flow of clientele for the evening. Management/receptionists learn to predict how busy a shift will be and therefore what time to close by the number of clientele that have booked/visited at particular time slots. Opening hours are generally less flexible with businesses opening at a regular hour each day. Thus, day shift workers tend to have more fixed or rigid times to their shifts where as night shift workers are expected to be more flexible with closing times often open ended, when the last client leaves.
informal regulative arrangements and processes, individual client needs or desires (personalised service), different work rhythms and temporalities of sex workers, management and clients. Thus, flexibility is an important and key feature of sex work.

Flexibility in work has traditionally been discussed in terms of a tool for greater efficiency for employers, with a shift from ‘flexibility for the worker to one of flexibility of the worker’ (Adam 1993:178). For workers in general, flexibility is often presented as a decrease in control over their working lives, diminished job security and the deterioration of boundaries between work and family life (Adams 1993, Burgess & Strachan 1999, Harvey 1999, Sennett 1998). However, for massage parlour workers, the direct link of work time to market fluctuations allows for the possibility to increase work shifts and money earning potential. For massage parlour management, this means a predictable ‘rostered’ workforce, flexible enough to work extra hours to cover absentees on shifts when needed, or be available to work on an ‘on-call’ basis for potential bookings during busy periods.

Sex workers will commence each shift with the expectation of doing at least two 'jobs', and if this is not reached, they have the option to work through to the next shift (double shift) or pick up another shift during the week to achieve their work quota. In this way, sex work is not wholly random, in that workers try to estimate their earnings per shift on the basis of their earning ability in terms of their physical attractiveness, communication and sexual skills, and their own regular client base. In addition, seasonal, sporting and cultural events can affect the number of clients visiting massage parlours.

Venus, Sarita and Sheila (below) talk about the number of ‘jobs’ that they expect to do each shift:

*I always work on getting two jobs and then once that’s done then I can relax. At one parlour I worked I had clients that would only see me and that’s the same here, and that means that I know that I’ve got a guaranteed job on the days that they come in.*

(Venus, parlour worker)

Sarita will work extra shifts to meet her weekly ‘outgoings’:

*I do work out how many jobs you need each week in order to pay the bills or to buy stuff, two jobs and I’m happy each shift. That gives*
me what I need, anything more is great, and anything less than that and I will do some extra shifts to try to make it up if it has been a bad week, not that I would be destitute, but I have set myself a figure to be comfortable. I like to treat myself and my kids.
(Sarita, parlour worker)

Sheila comments that workers often begin the shift in deficit:

[from the day I first started working I've always had this idea that I'll do whatever number of jobs tonight and as the years have passed the number has got smaller (laughs), but yeah I'll expect to do at least one job now a shift, and as long as that's a $100 job then that's fine with me. Anything less, well, then you're not really making it worth your while when you think about you have to pay for working here for a start and then petrol, smokes, condoms, and the crap you eat while you're here, it soon adds up. So, yeah, you have to start out with at least one job.
(Sheila, parlour worker)

Thus, workers will set a goal of, for example, three jobs for the shift and anything over is a bonus and anything less will have to be made up. Often workers may not reach their 'work quota' for the shift. Simone comments that,

I come into work and I can generally count on at least one job a shift with a regular and then normally, depends on the day, I can get two regulars and maybe get picked by someone else and then I'll have a really busy shift and get about five or six jobs. Sometimes it is hard to predict what is going to happen. If you don't have regulars then you've got to work your arse off to get your first couple of jobs under your belt.
(Simone, parlour worker)

Simone highlights the unpredictability or the precarious nature of sex work in which workers have little fixed or rigid ties to a massage parlour. However, this can work in the favour of workers in that they have the ability to chase work across the market moving from parlour to parlour, and between markets too. This can leave workers susceptible to
fluctuations of the market, unable to derive a guaranteed or fixed income. Similarly, Capelli (1999) argues that, in the case of contemporary employment, workers trade off maximum insecurity and uncertainty for high rewards, thus allowing more freedom for the employee based upon their investment in becoming more variable and skilled through mobility across the market. Similarly, sex workers are prepared to trade off management protection for their ability to move between massage parlours in a bid to increase their income, without having to relinquish control over their work practice (or bodies). In this sense, sex workers have more leverage to shape their working lives, in terms of securing a guaranteed income (number of jobs), though the risk component becomes greater.

Key to workers' success in mobility is their ability to upgrade their skills in the labour market. Capelli (1999) argues that contemporary workers are encouraged, and to a certain extent, expected to 'upskill' in order to compete in the labour market. The mobility within the massage parlour market enables sex workers to 'cash in' or 'take on' work attributes/reputations of their employers to help to further their careers. For example, often workers will advertise where they have previously worked as a testament to their skills and expertise. In addition, workers who have operated in massage parlours where training is provided for specialist services such as B&D, are able to take these skills and indeed possibly their regular clientele with them when they move on. Like the general employee population, those with marketable skills (specialist services) and the ability to manage their own careers, are able to achieve success (see Capelli, 1999), operating niche markets and maximising their earning potential. Venus comments on her experience:

"I worked for them (Francesca's) for over a year where I started to learn B&D. The owners actually thought that I had the potential to be a good B&D mistress and so they decided to train me properly. All the girls who work there have to learn to specialise and I was interested in learning all aspects of B&D even the real heavy stuff. My only problem was my age, I think you need to be older. I'm too young at the moment to be a serious B&D mistress even though I've learned a lot, and I'm not talking about the 'yeah I do B&D slap your arse sort of thing' either. I was taught well and got to watch how a real mistress worked. It's something that I want to get into properly and here at this place they look at me like I'm a real professional. As it is, no-one else has the skills to do heavy B&D here, and so I can very much do as I please. (Venus, parlour worker)
Sennett (1998), however, points to this instability for workers as being a ‘downside’ to the flexible organisation of work, whereby they are then forced to take risks with their work or careers. He argues that this risk taking can be a highly charged test of character in which individuals encounter uncertainty and ambiguity as part of an everyday experience (1998: 80). Work becomes more omnipresent and workers are under pressure to be on the look out for something better, searching for ‘openings’ or opportunities to achieve success and be successful (Sennett 1998). In this way, sex workers come under added pressure in terms of limited marketability. The physical attributes of the sex worker are an important part of her work, age in particular often determines a sex worker’s ‘marketability’. Thus, in the absence of employment protection for a guaranteed income, sex workers are under pressure as they get older to move across the market (or into other markets such as private escorts) to increase their opportunities for work. Sex workers have a limited number of lucrative years in terms of their marketability and, therefore, must maximise their rewards at any given chance. However, this may include performing sex services at a lower cost in order to attract clientele/business. Alicia, for example, often sits agitated at the beginning of her weekly shift, counting out how many ‘jobs’ she needs in order to meet her bill payments for the week, and is ever conscious of the precarious nature of sex work and the pressure for massage parlours and sex workers to lower prices and offer specials in order to compete with each other. Alicia remarks:

_I don’t mind doing the $70 specials, they’re easy to do, quick in and out no massage, just hop on top, an easy $50, but that means that instead of one job I need to do two to make up the money, and so when it’s quiet I’ll do an extra shift, even though I said to myself that I’ll only work one day a week I have to come in for another, or if one of my regulars makes a booking then I’ll come in as well._

(Alicia, parlour worker)

In addition to offering 'specials' or discount prices, workers will move on to go where the money is (see Day 1996). Opal comments on the dilemmas faced by workers:

_If a parlour isn’t doing too well then I don’t see any problem in moving to another one. I know a couple of girls here that are working two places at the same time just to make the money they need. I do like this place, but at the moment I’m not getting the work here. There just_
aren't enough clients coming through the door so I have to make the choice, do I stay and stick it out until things pick up or do I go to another place that's doing well at the moment.

(Opal)

For some sex workers the option to operate outside the massage parlour (seeing clients privately) is seen as a working solution to increase or supplement their income. Thus, by relying on a number of regular clients that workers established at the massage parlour, they have no need to advertise as an escort in the newspaper, avoiding having to register with the police. Louise comments:

I have a couple of gentlemen that I see out of work. I've been seeing them now for almost two years. They're regular clients of mine and I suppose they were the ones to suggest it and I wouldn't do it unless I knew them really well because I let them come to my house and they won't come to the parlour now as they find it too expensive and if I didn't see them private then I know they'd find someone else who would.

(Louise, parlour worker)

Sex work literature often points to the risk to sex workers from the potential for exploitation by massage parlour management (O'Connell Davidson, 1998). However, the inability of massage parlour management to control the labour market leaves management/owners vulnerable too, with the market and not management becoming the arbiter of labour market outcomes (see Capelli, 1999). In this way, massage parlour management are left vulnerable to the possibility of sex workers moving onto another parlour or choosing to work privately outside the parlour, and taking many of their regular clients with them. That is not to say that management are unable to, or do not attempt to, exploit their relationship with sex workers through the intervention of monies and the imposition of fees and fines for diverse costs.

Massage parlour management expect workers to refrain from seeing clients outside the massage parlour, working on the notion of loyalty or commitment to the workplace that is attained in a 'standard work' context. However, this expectation of loyalty comes without the benefits awarded to employees in the form of a 'standard wage' and benefits such as payments for holidays, sickness and so forth, which effectively purchases the non-working
time of an employee, ensuring the full value of productivity during the working time of that employee (see Harvey 1999). Similar to ‘non-standard’ or contingent (flexible) work (see Harvey, 1999), sex workers receive payment only for the blocks of time that they are contracted to work by the client, and do not receive remuneration for the non-working time outside the parlour. Massage parlour management are unable to bind sex workers to a written contract stating their obligations as contracted workers because of their ambiguous legal status and must, therefore, rely upon massage parlour work policy to prohibit workers operating outside the parlour in their own time with parlour clientele. Such behaviour is considered by management to be stealing from the business. In addition, massage parlour management expect workers to operate from only one massage parlour at a time, thus reducing the possibility of losing regular clients to another massage parlour. Workers caught ‘moonlighting’ at another massage parlour or seeing clients outside parlour hours are usually dismissed.

Though management treat workers as free-lance operators in order to avoid entering into employment agreements (as well as the legal implications) and operate a system of flexibility to suit their needs when there is a staff shortage, nevertheless they remain unwilling to acknowledge the free-lance status sex workers outside the parlour and their ability to work privately/independently from the business. Eric states, albeit in his own unique way, that

[a] working girl has to be essentially all things to all men, very simple, she bends, she changes. If you are a working girl and you work for me, then all men are your food and you do not see men outside work. It’s important that the girls don’t charge too much, that the girls don’t see them outside and the girls don’t fuck them off, ‘cos a client will get up and go elsewhere. A client can run hot for a long time and if you do him well then he might run hot for life, you’ve got to make that fuss and give them a bit of adulation make them feel special.

(Eric, parlour manager)

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11 I have been instructed on a number of occasions by the manager at Diorls to phone around different massage parlours to inquire about girls suspected of moonlighting. It can be difficult to monitor/control workers' movements if they change work names, however, some parlour management have reciprocal arrangements to inform each other about unreliable workers, those suspected of moonlighting, and so forth.

12 The rules of the majority of massage parlours clearly spell out that workers must not exchange phone numbers or any contact details with clients, nor make arrangements to meet outside work (see appendix ii workplace policy).
Controlling the non-working time of parlour workers is problematic for massage parlour management, raising the contentious issue of the 'ownership' of 'regular clients'. As 'free-lance' workers, sex workers are able to exit a massage parlour and take a large number of their regular clientele with them. Management claim to have a vested interest in the 'ownership' of regular clientele and argue that it is the massage parlour that provides workers with a professional, 'quasi-legal', safe and relatively private environment for the client/sex worker encounter. Furthermore, it is through their financial investment in the work environment that allows workers to compete with market demand. Alternatively, sex workers argue that they must invest their own time and effort into establishing a regular clientele base and, therefore, the clients or 'business' essentially belongs to them. Indeed, it is this time outside the room (non-paid time for the worker) which can be crucial for establishing a rapport with clients, and sex workers claim that it is the skills (including physical characteristics) and work of the worker which often determines whether or not the client will book a massage. For workers, this time spent with clients in this way is 'unpaid'; however, it is taken for granted by management that workers invest their unpaid time to recruit clientele in this way as part of the overall organisation of sex work in a massage parlour.

Massage parlours management assess the competence and integrity of their workers by their level of customer service; that is, their ability to build a regular client base for themselves and the parlour, and, most importantly, to keep that client base at work. Thus, a sex worker's professional status is linked to how she separates her 'free-time' or 'non-working time' to that of her 'work time' (see Marchand, Reid & Berents, 1998; O'Connell Davidson, 1998, 1994; Phoenix, 1999). Thus, seeing clients outside the massage parlour 'work time' not only breaks parlour rules, but also has the potential to blur the boundaries between work and personal life for sex workers. Moreover, the flexible approach to 'overtime' or covering extra shifts that management encourage in 'times of need', often crosses over into the personal time of workers, making it difficult for workers to establish and maintain this separation. However, when workers attempt to use their own time in this way for their own benefit (extra jobs), they are considered unprofessional, untrustworthy, deviant and dishonest. Though it does not suit massage parlour management to have a wholly 'free-lance' workforce, they are both unable and unwilling to implement a 'standard' form of employment to their organisation of sex work. Thus, workers do not receive any guarantee of a secure income for their employment duration. Flexibility (in terms of the organisation of sex work) and the lack of protection and guarantees serve both to bind and free massage parlour management and sex workers in terms of work practice
and organisation. Thus, according to O'Connell-Davidson, the different types of 'employment relations' are linked to the conditions of the labour market, whether it is slack or tight and what is economically attractive to the business owner (1998: 21), and I could also include the sex worker here.

'Room Time'

Massage parlour management tries to organise or regulate all aspects of work practice outside the sex worker/client encounter by attempting to regulate the time of workers through shifts and timetables. The control over work and time is something that is continually contested between workers and management in general. This struggle stems largely from what Ditton (1979) describes as the 'linear time' orientation of all management and the 'cyclic time' orientation of all workers. Massage parlour management, for instance, are consumed by the linearity of clock time, massage time/bought time, timetables and shifts. Workers, on the other hand, use their knowledge of 'event cycles' in order to control time, room/work time, down time, identity time, personal time, and their own work rhythms. Like Ditton's (1979) bakers, sex workers possess a repertoire of (unofficial) 'instrumental acts' for exercising control over the pace of their time. These are personal strategies, rhythms or skills of working that enable sex workers to achieve their goals and a degree of autonomy over their work.

Room time is the segment of time (massage time) that the client purchases from the massage parlour. This time block commences when the client and sex worker adjourn to a massage room for the transaction. These time blocks are generally divided into half hour, three quarters of an hour and one hour segments. In addition, some massage parlours will offer clients fifteen or twenty minute specials\(^\text{13}\). Massage time is generally booked or bought by the client at the reception desk prior to entering the parlour. Traditionally, sex workers earned their money through the provision of 'extras' or 'tips' (the provision of sexual services, negotiated with the client). In this way, a worker's fee is based on the service she provides and not the time that she spends in the room with the client. For example, a sex worker can earn $100 for a 'full-service' irrespective of the time segment a client books\(^\text{14}\). However, the introduction of the all-inclusive package as a means to

\(^{13}\) These specials often entail sexual intercourse and do not include a massage. Some specials will offer a 'half service' or 'helping hand', masturbation.

\(^{14}\) Thus, in this way, the ideal situation for a worker is for every job to be a half hour massage with a 'full service'
compete with the cheaper escort market that operates on a 'one fee' system for clients (without the overheads of a massage parlour) and, as a way to streamline/standardise the parlour services, changed the payment options for clients and earning abilities for workers.

The all-inclusive is a predetermined service essentially incorporating massage and a full-service, linking the workers' payment to the duration of the service\(^\text{15}\) and, therefore, is a contentious issue for workers. For example, a half hour all-inclusive is currently $110 at Dior's massage lounge (this is a standard fee). Out of this payment the sex worker receives $80 for the service and the business receives $30 (massage/door fee). The conflict between workers and management over the all-inclusive service largely stems from management's expectation that this service should include a massage and a 'full service' for a reduced fee (shouldered by the worker). Sex workers further argue that, in this way, management interferes in the service negotiations of 'free-lance' workers and devalue this service. Sam explains her objections:

\begin{quote}
I hate the all-inclusive and will try not to do one if I can help it. I just don't think that the management should have the right to get involved and set the price, which is less than I would normally get for a job and expect us to give a full-service too. It's a rip off, and that's why the clients like them. They get the good deal, the parlour gets a good deal and doesn't have to take a drop in door fee. It's us, the girls, that have to take the loss.
\end{quote}

(Sam, parlour worker)

Though the all-inclusive generally means a reduction in the maximum amount of money a worker can receive for a full service, it does, however, guarantee money for the worker and removes the need to haggle with clients over 'extras', as well as removing the threat of encountering a 'straight'\(^\text{16}\). In this way, workers trade-off the uncertainty of the free-lance (extras) system - and the possibility of maximising their income - for the security and guaranteed money (though at a lower rate of pay) of an all-inclusive system. For Tiffany, the all-inclusive system removes the stress of money exchange or negotiation between client and worker:

\(^{15}\)See appendix for fees and distribution of monies of all-inclusives
[w]ell in some ways I quite liked it (all-inclusives), because, well, there is always the fear of going in the room and that it's going to be a straight. There's not that many, but you do get the odd one. And it's horrible when it does happen, and in some ways I like knowing what I'm getting into. Then there are things like, you get a guy who just wants a hand job. I mean, I know it's money but, I don't think it's a very pleasant thing to do and it's, well, when you go through to the room you're hoping that this guy is going to be $100 and not anything less, and it ends up being a hand job, well, you know. Another thing I really hated to do was to talk about the money in the room. It just made me feel awkward.

(Tiffany, parlour worker/escort)

Monitoring Room 'Time'
By selling 'massage time' the massage parlour enters into a contract with the client. It is the understanding in this contract that the massage fee entitles the client to a massage and if required, any extras are then negotiated with the sex worker. In accepting the fee, O'Connell Davidson argues that the massage parlour implicitly contracts to provide the client with a masseuse who will provide sexual services (1998). In New Zealand, the 'all-inclusive' service that the massage parlours offer, clearly positions the parlour as a third party in the sex worker/client transaction. Management therefore, have a vested interest to honour their part of the contract with clients, ensuring that the client receives the time and/or service they have purchased. Unlike sex workers in other sex markets, the massage parlour worker is required to give some form of massage to the client as part of their service. The client purchases the massage or 'massage time' from the parlour and if he so wishes is entitled, according to the agreement with the massage parlour, to receive a massage for the entire duration of the purchased time segment. However, the permutation of legislative regulations and the fact that sex work generally takes place in a private room limits management control over the sex worker/client encounter in terms of work practice and service that takes place in the room. Thus, massage parlour management resort to a  

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16 A 'straight' client does not request any sexual service and visits the massage parlour for the purpose of a massage only. Workers' animosity towards 'straights' stems from the fact that they do not receive payment for providing a massage.
combination of formal and informal arrangements and networks as a means to monitor 'room time'.

The formal organisation of room time in a massage parlour involves recording the commencement and termination of massage time on 'shift sheets' or 'time sheets' as a means to ensure that sex workers and clients do not exceed the time segment that has been purchased. The recorded data can vary between parlours, but generally the shift sheets record the name of the client and the sex worker, the time segment (or special) he has purchased, the method of payment (cash, credit card or eftpos), and the time that the service commenced and finished. Management have a vested interest to ensure that clients do not 'tie-up' workers’ time unnecessarily, impeding their ability to service other paying clients. In addition, by recording details, management can ensure that workers do not negotiate further or extra time with a client without the knowledge of the massage parlour (pocketing the cash for extended 'massage/room' time). Cheryl comments:

"It doesn’t happen on a regular basis, but you do get some clients who want to cum again, and well, that’s another $100 plus the door fee ok. If the receptionist isn’t on to it then you just pocket the extra. So, in that way I don’t see myself being dishonest or anything. It’s their job to ask for the extra money is how I see it."

(Cheryl, parlour worker)

The recording of 'room time' sessions is often not sufficient to ensure that sessions between workers and clients finish on time, and receptionists or managers often have to knock on the door of the room to alert the 'occupants'. In addition, workers are also encouraged by management to self-regulate their 'room time' through the policy of the worker liable to pay for the extended time if the client refuses to pay. Thus, as a precaution, managers will knock on the door of the massage room as a means to indicate the conclusion of a session/encounter. This is particularly important in the case of workers or clients who have reputation for going over their allotted time segment. In addition, on busy shifts workers often have to share rooms, making time keeping crucial to ensure that rooms are available. However, management at both Studio 14B and Dior’s encourage

17 See appendix.
18 At Studio 14B the time that a client entered the premises, the room number and the amount of towels used was also recorded on the sheet.
managers/receptionists to be flexible for regular clientele and give a ten minute reprieve before knocking on the door.

Management also monitors room time in order to prevent workers from cutting the client's time short, since time is used to measure the quality of the worker's service. However, workers will point out that clients often purchase time segments without the desire to remain for the full duration after the sexual service has been performed. Jade comments:

\[i]t doesn't matter whether a client books in for half an hour or an hour they will always be ready to go in twenty minutes, and I find it hard to drag out the time in the room and most of the time the poor guy just wants to get out of there, but then you have B coming down on you (imitates voice) 'you're selling the guys short. You've got to give them the full amount of time they've paid for', and I think they just want out of there. I mean, paying for an hour is just one of those guy things.\]

(Jade, parlour worker)

**Crafting the Service: a client-centred approach**

The development of a 'client-centred' approach to sex work emerged largely from marketing strategies by massage parlour management to distance themselves from the stigma of prostitution and to reinvent themselves more as adult entertainment venues. The massage parlour market in general has experienced a decrease in the frequency of client visits and more careful spending and bargaining of client dollars. In response, management have made attempts to streamline, 'normalise', or 'professionalise' their operations. A pivotal feature of these changes has been the (re)organisation of sex worker/client contact and a move to more client-centred approach of selling sexual services, as Bev states:

\[t]he market has changed a lot since I first started working in it twenty odd years ago, you don't make as much money as you used to. It has changed a lot over the last few years. It's the volume of clientele that come through that has changed. They want more for their money and you can't just push them through any more. They've got more things
to do with their money these days, and the sex industry isn’t top of their list any more. So, you’ve got to try and give them what they want, read their minds.

(Bev, parlour manager)

Thus, this has seen a move from the traditional ‘rotation system’ of worker selection to the ‘visual request system’. The rotation system operated through the receptionist/manager. The client paid a fee at the door and was then assigned the next available woman on the shift. This can be viewed as a production line style of organising worker selection and meant that the client did not have the luxury of choosing the worker for the encounter, unless he specifically booked a particular woman. Also this system could guarantee an income (jobs) for workers, (as long as clients came into the parlour). In addition, workers were not obliged to ‘entertain’ the client outside the room in their unpaid time. However, the rotation system also placed control of a worker’s income in the hands of the receptionist/manager who could then determine the number of jobs that the worker received. It was, therefore, open to bias or favouritism of the management. This system also intruded upon a worker’s ability to maximise her income if her marketability was high. Anna comments on her experience:

[a] lot of massage parlours used to work on a system based on taking turns to service the client. The client would come into the parlour, pay his money for the massage and the receptionist would call through to the lounge, where we all were, and call out whose turn it was to go through and greet the client. Clients didn’t have much say in who they went with. I mean they could say no, do you have anyone else, like if he wanted a busty blonde of something, but he had little opportunity to talk with the woman before going through and couldn’t really decide whether or not she would be providing the service he was after, but that didn’t really matter then.

(Anna, parlour worker)

The client-centred approach of sex work emphasises more free-lance work attitudes and characteristics of working, organised around competing for clients, and geared towards the establishment of a ‘regular’ clientele for workers and the business. In this way, management and indeed some workers attempt to position the client as an arbiter in the
service work of the sex worker, whereby client feedback and the number of regular clients accumulated work as an indicator of a worker's professionalism. Tyler explains:

[i]f you learn to read the client well then you will end up getting requests and getting them to come back again. You’ve got to remember that it’s more than just the sex that they come here for, it’s the whole experience that they’re after, all the pampering, all the fantasy of the encounter. So, you’ve got to give them something that they don’t get at home with the wife. You’ve got to remember that in this game you’re dealing with people, with their needs.

(Tyler, parlour worker and ‘unofficial’ manager)

The notion of ‘professionalism’ is important in the challenge to increase client numbers and profits for both management and workers. For management, this tends to manifest itself in frameworks or rules aimed at controlling or influencing the work practice of sex workers in a bid to ensure a ‘quality’ service. Sarah comments that

[c]lient satisfaction with our services is very important to us. It’s the way in which you get them to keep coming back. So, we will stress to clients that if they are not happy with the service, then they should let us know. It’s very very rare, extremely rare to get a dissatisfied client and that basically comes down to the training that we give the ladies when they start working for us. No lady is allowed to work here until they have been trained.

(Sarah, parlour owner and B&D mistress)

Eric operates what could be termed as one of the ‘sleazier’ parlours in Christchurch, in which organised orgies, sex shows and the open use of sex ‘toys’ are a regular feature on the menu of services offered at the parlour. Indeed, orgies are synonymous with this massage parlour. Eric views this service as a ‘public relations stunt’ to ‘pamper’ or indulge the clients with what he terms ‘the ultimate erotic experience’. These ‘events’ set the theme of the parlour and the type of work practice that management expect from workers. On an orgy night, the client pays a set fee at the door that allows him to indulge in random sexual activity with as many girls as he can manage. The orgy nights operate on the assumption that workers in the parlour will partake in the orgies free of charge or for a nominal fee,
since Eric views these events as a way in which workers are able to enhance their career and at the same time benefit the business. Eric explains how this operates:

[Testimonial 1]

Thus, orgies are used as a means to promote the business and ‘hook’ regular clients through indulging them with what Eric believes to be the ‘ultimate fantasy’ for a client. In this way, Eric claims to be able to measure the level of professionalism of ‘his girls’, by the donation of their time and skills free of charge, thereby demonstrating their commitment and loyalty to the parlour, the clients and their career.

[Testimonial 2]

The use of workers' 'free' or non-paid time as a means to 'hook' and entertain clients has become standard practice in massage parlour work. For example, Studio 14B is organised around the idea of a gentlemen's club, and is marketed as a place where clients can spend time and be 'pampered'. To promote this idea, the massage parlour boasts a sumptuous decor and furnishings in the public lounge and private rooms. A licensed bar that has the appearance of a 'town bar', including a chalk board wine list reminiscent of a city cafe/bar, helps to further create the idea of a gentleman’s club. The bar is used to remove the

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20 The owner of Studio 14B insisted that the parlour had to be addressed as a 'gentleman's' and shift managers were instructed not to refer to the business as a massage parlour.
impersonality or routine from the client/worker contact by creating the fantasy of a date or private club atmosphere. The lighting in the lounge area is subtle with numerous dark enclaves for discreet or intimate conversation. In addition, a pool table is situated towards one end of the lounge and adding to the facade of a ‘club’.

Clients at Studio 14B are permitted to enter the parlour without having to book a massage at the door. They enter under the pretence of a ‘guest’ or what we called a ‘hostess client’. In this way, workers are then expected to entice the client to book a massage. First time ‘hostess clients’ are also given a guided tour of the parlour by the manager or one of the sex workers. This approach to attracting clients is often referred to by other parlour management as ‘coffee clubbing’ clients, whereby sex work becomes a more prolonged process.

Sam’s experience of ‘coffee clubbing’ clients has not always ended successfully:

‘You can sit there and talk to a client for a bloody half hour and have the best conversation even and think ‘oh we get on really well’ and think that he’s going to pick me, and yet he’ll turn around and go ‘oh what’s that lady’s name over there again’ and want to go through with her and you just think, ‘you prick’, I’ve just wasted half an hour with you and there could’ve been other clients in there that I could’ve gone through with in that half an hour and made $100.’

(Sam, parlour worker)

Similarly at Dior’s massage parlour, the comfort and entertainment of clients is the responsibility of the workers. Though Dior’s does not have a licensed bar, clients are given complimentary drinks once they have booked a massage (paid a door fee), and provided with the use of spa pools, sauna, billiard and television rooms, in the accompaniment of the sex worker that they have chosen. Thus, the free or unpaid time of a worker becomes an integral part of massage parlour sex work and is taken as a given by parlour management as part of sex work practice. Bev comments:

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21 It is up to the discretion of the manager to ensure that the client does not get too drunk at the bar or for the ‘host’ client to abuse the privilege by sitting in the bar too long and monopolising the ladies’ time without booking.
Clients want to be comfortable and relaxed. I like the girls to sit down and talk to the client, get to know them, get to know what the client likes, how he takes his coffee or tea, does he like to have a spa or sauna before or after, or a game of pool. I want them to have a good time so that they'll want to come back. You've got to make that little effort.

(Bev, parlour manager)

In this way, the responsibility for establishing a regular clientele is placed upon the worker by management, who must invest a significant amount of her own non-paid time to establish regular business for herself and in turn for the massage parlour, through 'coffee clubbing' as in Studio 14B, or partaking in events such as the orgies at Eric's parlour. Competition between sex workers for regular clientele is further encouraged or 'institutionalised' through a formal monthly/weekly 'tally' of regular clients that a worker has processed. For example, at Studio 14B a list of workers and the number of their requests (regular clients) that they had received throughout a month is displayed in the staff/kitchen area. Information from this list can be used by management as a means to gauge the work practice/professionalism of individual workers. For example, a worker who processes a high number of 'visual' (walk in) clients, and a very low number of requests (as a regular client) raises suspicion. In this case, managers suggest that either the work practice of this worker is poor, or the worker is 'poaching' clients from the parlour (doing private work).22

In contrast to this 'shaming' approach of work incentive of the monthly tally of 'regulars', Tony (a massage parlour owner) uses a monetary incentive to induce workers to provide a service that will encourage return custom23. This incentive works similar to a commission system, whereby workers are paid in the form of retainer (for example, shift fee costs), which increases with the number of requests a worker receives. In this way, parlour management shares the responsibility for building regular clientele. Tony comments:

I give the girls incentives to try and get customers to come back, like money, like a sort of bonus or a commission. I try to get them on side by giving them a bonus for getting regulars, if they're nice to a

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22 In this way workers use the massage parlour as a means to contact clients for their private work.

23 However, Tony's current enthusiasm or optimism can possibly be explained by his recent purchase of the massage parlour business and general lack of experience managing a sex business.
customer and the customer enjoys their time and they come back, it’s x amount of dollars a week for them. So, it works out to being regular money for them to get customers to come back, to get regulars. I look at it sometimes, and think that I shouldn’t have to give them an incentive, but if that’s what it takes then that’s what I have to do. It’s costing me money, but if it gets the people coming back, getting the regulars coming back again, then I’m happy.

(Tony, parlour owner)

Other parlours use more subtle methods for incentive. For example, Catherine talks about securing a place on a particular shift in a busy parlour, and given first choice in the allocation of rooms:

[t]hose that had been there longer, mostly because they were busy with regular clientele would get to keep the same room all night. There weren’t enough rooms to go around and they would be able to keep theirs which made working a lot easier as they had all their stuff set out, so that was because they were busy and the other girls knew that if they were as busy then they would have the same privilege as though they had been there three or four years.

(Catherine, parlour worker)

Management also encourage clients to take an active role in the provision of services by providing direct feedback on their experience. Here the client’s voice is given authority in the organisation of work practice. Bev, a parlour manager comments:

[h]ow I see it is that they’re not doing the business or themselves any good overcharging in the room. I tell them the going rate and what it should be here and you do get to find out as the clients talk and the girls talk, and if I find out that a girl is overcharging in the room I’ll pull her aside and give her a warning and tell her that I won’t tolerate clients being ripped off or the business being ripped of here.

(Bev, parlour manager)
At Studio 14B, management rely upon a number of clients to report back to the
management if they are not satisfied by the service they receive, such as being overcharged
or not receiving a full-service in an all-inclusive. Joe, a regular at Studio 14B comments:

[s]ome of the top girls who have worked here for years, you know, the
really top girls, they are really business like but they are really good.
They gave you a long massage and they never hurried you. You could
tell by how busy they were by the amount of requests these girls got.
They were in demand and I knew that they were real business women,
really good ones. You see, the average bloke knows when he is being
processed. You get to know instantly, and you just think, never again
and you just don’t go back.
(Joe, client)

Client feedback is not the sole domain of regular clients at Studio 14B, as the following
notice appears in each massage room:

**Gentlemen**

It is of utmost importance to me as owner of Studio
14B, that services availed to you during your visit here
have been exemplary from your arrival at reception, to
your departure from our business.
If any facet of any service given to you is not of the high
standard we take pride in offering, then please feel
welcome to contact me, in strict confidence during
office hours. It is of great concern to me if you are less
than happy with even the smallest thing while a guest
on our premises.

**Thank you**

(Studio 14B)

In addition to feedback from clients, massage parlour management can usually rely upon a
core group of workers who are prepared to ‘nark’ on what they consider to be breaches in
work ethics or behaviour. The competitive nature of sex work often spurs workers to be
vigilant with fellow workers who are known or are suspected of 'hiking' prices, meeting clients outside the massage parlour, performing unsafe or unethical \(^{24}\) practices. In addition, the 'cut throat' competition that is encouraged among workers by management can result in 'narking' being used as a means to eliminate competition. Brigid comments on her experience of being targeted by her work colleagues:

"I come here to work and not sit around on my fat backside expecting the work to come to me and I think that's what they didn't like, that I was doing really well. You can call it hustling if that's what it is, but I wasn't taking work off anybody that I could see. As far as I'm concerned if you don't put in the effort then you don't get the work, and some of those bitches just didn't like it, and started going to the management complaining about me, saying I was overcharging clients in the room that I was a hustler, and then they started saying I was a thief. Things would apparently start to go missing, and of course I would have to be the last one at the scene.

(Brigid, parlour worker)

The actual 'in-room' work practice of sex workers can be observed and assessed by fellow workers by performing 'doubles', either straight or 'bi-doubles'. \(^{25}\) Alicia comments:

"I hate doing a double with Candy and I've told B not to put us together. She just lets them touch her anywhere and I won't let their hands going anywhere near down there, but she just lets them go down and that's just not good for the person you're working with or the rest of the girls as they, you know, the clients, will expect it from all of us. She's just got no boundaries and it makes it difficult when you're doing the double as you spend most of the time saying, 'no you can't do that, no you can't do that.'

(Alicia, parlour worker)

\(^{24}\) According to notions of 'professional' work practice among sex workers.

\(^{25}\) Straight doubles entails two workers performing sexual services with the client. Bi-doubles entails two sex workers performing sexual services on the client and on each other.
The validity of using clients and sex workers to informally regulate the 'in room' work practice of sex workers can be subject to the individual interests of the informants. Clients, for instance, may have their own individual notions of 'professionalism' and have been known to misuse the trust of management for their own gains. Likewise, workers are able to further their own interests and eliminate competition, as in the case of Brigid.

**Standardising Services: training workers and 'niche' markets**

In line with the client-centred approach to sex work organisation, massage parlours have developed niche markets within the general parlour market catering to the tastes, needs, and desires of clients, offering specialist skills and services. In an attempt to address the decrease in client numbers and increased competition across sex industry markets, particularly from the ‘private escort’ market offering cheaper services, massage parlours sought to upgrade or rethink their philosophy on selling sexual services. Thus, massage parlours are seen to be exploring new or different approaches for packaging and marketing sex work. Like any other business, owners and management of massage parlours aim to make a profit, provide a good service and establish a good reputation to compete in the market, with the services that a sex worker provides as being paramount to the business’ profits. Sarah comments on her approach to organising her business:

> Our priorities, we got into this initially to make money but also to run a really good sound business regardless of what the industry is, that's always been our aim and goal. So, to look at it as a normal, this is a normal business, to us it is a normal business. We treat it no differently, the principles that we operated in previous businesses are exercised here, and have been right from the start.

(Sarah, parlour owner & B&D mistress)

The number of services available in the sex markets today is quite extensive. Many sex workers will attest that not all the services they provide actually involve ‘sex’ (coital intercourse). The most acceptable (average) or practised sexual services among the sample of Christchurch massage parlour workers are oral (fellatio/French), hand jobs, sex (coitus), doubles, light bondage and fantasy jobs. Furthermore, the services that parlour workers offer can vary between massage parlours. For example, workers who operate
from a fantasy/B&D parlour such as Francesca’s are expected to perform fantasy massage and own a range of sex toys. Penny explains:

[w]e do a lot of fantasy massage here and what you do is role play, get dressed up and it may be a french maid ... a school girl or biker’s chick. We use toys as well you know sexual toys and we use them quite a lot on the clients mainly. And then I do genuine bi-doubles and quite a lot of fantasy doubles, role playing with another lady in the room with the client, getting dressed up and that. I also work as a submissive and a strip nurse. I do body cleanses which is enemas ... you put this pipe in which you flush warm water through and you use a lot of toys and dress up as a nurse. There are a lot of clients who pay me to be a submissive for an hour or two. Generally what that entails is that you get spankings and stuff and you get tied up by the client in various ways ... bondage ways. You talk about what you’re going to do beforehand, you have a code word to make it all stop if you need to. It’s something that gets them off, you know, dominating you for an hour and treating you like a piece of dirt. It doesn’t worry me or get to me like some girls would probably end up in tears.

(Penny, parlour worker)

Services offered by sex workers tend to follow or reflect sexual trends in general (Perkins, 1991). For example, practices such as oral (French, fellatio) - once considered perverted and dirty within the sex work industry - now is a standard part of the ‘straight sex’ repertoire of sex workers. Today services like anal (Greek) is considered by sex workers to be just as perverted as oral (fellatio) was twenty years earlier. However, sex workers comment that the demand for anal has increased greatly over the last few years, with generally only a couple of girls per parlour cornering the market for this particular service. Venus comments:

I’m, I guess, I’m what you would call ‘versatile. I do an anal service, and just me and another girl here that will do it. Not a lot of girls offer this service or own up to offering it as it’s considered skanky by the

26 See appendix for an example of the services available.
girls. I always said that I wouldn't do it with a client and only with my partner, but if you know what you're doing and how to do it safely then I see it as no different to doing anything else, except you can charge more for it, and I make sure that I do!
(Venus, parlour worker)

The services that clients request can vary:

I have this one client which I'm sure you'll know who I'm talking about, comes in and books forty-five minutes and will bring all his bits and pieces in a plastic bag, his own soap and towels, gloves. He likes to shower for exactly like seven minutes before and after, and in the room he likes to put glad wrap over my bottom and lick it. He'll do this for about twenty minutes, licking away, comical really, but, hey whatever turns him on! (laughs) He won't have sex, just a hand job and when I do that he makes me put on the surgical gloves that he brings!
(Claré, parlour worker)

I've got this one guy who comes in every week, books an hour and brings lunch and we lie on the bed and have lunch which is quite good with a bottle of wine and talk. Another client comes up from Dunedin once a month and sends me books to read. I have to give him an overview of the book for about twenty minutes to prove that I've read it and he'll correct me and stuff. We never have sex. I just have to stand there in my underwear critiquing this bloody book (laughs).
(Jody)

Thus, in Sarah’s up-market massage parlour (Francesca’s), sex workers are given a full day of ‘training’ by the management in an attempt to provide a standard framework for services. This incorporates advice concerning personal presentation and behaviour, an introduction to sensual massage and fantasy massage, and condom use in an attempt to introduce a particular standard of behaviour and work ethic. As part of the ‘in-house’ training, Sarah or her business partner (also an ‘active’ sex worker) observe or partake in a
worker's first client encounter\textsuperscript{27}, as well as implement the buddy system on the worker's first shift\textsuperscript{28}, Jody comments on her experience:

\begin{quote}
It was weird, one minute I'm massaging the client and the next minute she (Sarah) comes in and starts to do the other half of him. Then we flip him over and do the same and then she goes, and she was watching me and talking to the client all the time at the same time, and then after, when the client has gone she comes over to me and says that I did well and said but you need to do this and you need to say this.  

(Jody, parlour worker)
\end{quote}

Training is considered to be an essential component of management duties at Francesca's since the business offers clients specialised services, such as fantasies and a range of B&D services, and workers are presented to clients as being experienced and highly skilled. Alan, a regular client at Francesca's, comments on his experience:

\begin{quote}
The girls are very good at what they do and I've had a couple of favourites in the time that I've been going there, developed a bit of an attachment for, but that's me (laughs). I keep going there because I know that Sarah runs a tight ship and her girls are professionals. I know what I'm going to get when I go there. You can't say that about many places.  

(Alan, client)
\end{quote}

Furthermore, workers who have operated in other massage parlours are re-trained at Francesca's in order to (as Sarah refers to it) 'get rid of bad habits'. Thus, by re-training workers, management attempt to standardise their services. Alex comments on her experience of training:

\begin{quote}
I had worked before I came here and so they got me to show them things like how I put on a condom, how I massaged, you know, all those sort of things, and I had to do a double with Sarah, with one of
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{27} Often regular clients are used for the purpose of training.
their regulars. Afterwards, she sat me down and told me all the things that I should and shouldn't do. It was quite funny really. She was nice about it, and offered to train me to do some of the B&D clients.

(Alex, parlour worker)

Similarly, these sentiments are echoed by other massage parlour managers, who calculate the number of requests or 'jobs' that a sex worker receives as indicative of the quality of her work and approach her professional approach to work. Eric comments:

[a] working girl without a toy is like a plumber without a wrench. Look, guys get bored with the same old. So, he might go out and have other girls, and so as a working girl you need another layout. Toys then become a whole new thing. You can have a genuine orgasm for a client with a toy, and that's a trip for a lot of clients. A lot of them are into fantasy and fantasy is fucking huge. We cater to fantasy, we cater for anything that the client wants. The actual trappings don't matter that much, its more what the hookers can do.

(Eric, parlour manager)

In addition to training sessions, the reworking of sex work practice entails the efficient use of workers' body time. Sarah explains:

I don't think that you need to work all hours in this business to make money, your body is important and you need to look after it and that means working reasonable hours. A lot of the ladies here have children or family responsibilities and so they need to be able to function at home and be sufficiently rested when they come to work. I don't want to see ladies yawning with black rings under their eyes, clients don't need to see that.

(Sarah, parlour owner, B&D mistress)

An older or more experienced sex worker is chosen by the management to guide the new worker through her first shift. The experienced worker is able to advise the new worker on the procedure in the room with regards to negotiations, sexual services, safe sex paraphernalia and general orientation of the massage parlour.
Thus, traditional massage parlour operating hours are reorganised to reflect the particular niche market of specialist services catering for business/professional clientele. The massage parlour operates between the hours 9am and 10pm daily and closes on Sunday. Services are organised and appointments/bookings made on an all-inclusive basis. Furthermore, discreet street signage serves to discourage the ‘off-street’ clients\(^{29}\) and encourage clients to make phone bookings. Penny comments:

> [w]hen the clients come here they know what they are going to get because everything is on an all-inclusive price. They pay $100 for a straight half an hour, $130 for the hour and it’s extra for fantasy or B&D work so they pay for all that up front. You give them a good massage, and you don’t just flip them over - you give them a good massage and a good time and that’s what they pay for.

(Penny)

Clients make telephone bookings based on physical descriptions of the workers given over the telephone. This booking system allows management the opportunity to intervene in work distribution if they wish. This enables them to punish or rid themselves of workers who fail to comply with their standards or regulations by simply cutting off their work supply. However, in spite of attempts to standardise work practice through their attention to detail by training workers and monitoring work practice, management must still rely on the willingness of sex workers to adopt such practice during ‘room time’. Like massage parlour management in general, they are unable to choreograph every aspect of room time or the services that a worker will provide, since sex work is subject to the individual work rhythms and the competency and commitment of the sex workers to maintain the reputation of the business. Thus, like other massage parlours, the management at Francesca’s also use a combination of informal networks as a means to monitor work practice within the client/sex worker encounter. These include the use of client feedback forms from regular clientele and information derived from ‘narking’ or worker networks within the massage parlour. In addition, management also attempt to nurture the self-regulation of workers by constructing a form of reciprocal ‘trust relationship’ with sex workers.

\(^{29}\) Though the off-street clients are not shunned when they arrive at the door, they are soon made familiar with the parlour protocol of bookings.
The Performance of Sex Work: work rhythms

The control or management of 'room time' is fundamental to the ability of a sex worker to engage in sex work on a regular basis, affecting her ability to give meaning to her work and construct a viable work identity. As a result, workers tend to infuse everyday notions of skill, boredom, routine, rituals, pay and control over their work in order to present what they do as 'work' and thereby ascribe it meaning (Brewis & Linstead, 2000a; O'Neill, 2001). Indeed, Day (1990) states that for prostitution to look and feel like work, it must exist separately from all that is not work. Thus, sex workers put a great deal of effort into circumscribing, limiting and demarcating work within the client encounter (Brewis & Linstead, 2000a; Day, 1990; O'Connell Davidson, 1995).

In a massage parlour, the massage service quickly becomes a useful part of the routine of work or 'room time', allowing for an element of mundanity or routine to creep into the encounter. This 'work routine' enables workers to establish some semblance of separation between work and personal or recreational lives/sex. Maintaining the 'mask' for 'preserving self identity' is not necessarily an easy matter or process for sex workers since often both work and personal lives are intertwined. Thus, the process of separation becomes a daily task or ritual (Brewis & Linstead, 2000a; O'Connell Davidson, 1994; O'Neill, 1997). In this way, the management of the sex worker/client encounter or 'room time' has an important symbolic meaning for workers' identities. Thus, for massage parlour workers, the massage service can function as an important 'distancing technique' for workers, allowing them to frame themselves as service workers (Brewis & Linstead, 2000a).

Even in the most prescribed or externally determined task processes, workers are able to construct their own 'event based' reckoning systems (Ditton, 1979; Roy, 1990) or the pursuit of autonomy through self-organisation activities or 'misbehaviour' (see Ackroyd & Thompson; Collinson, 1992, 2000). Similarly, Adam (1993) contends that even the smallest mundane externally controlled work processes are set to an individual's rhythm of working. Thus, a highly prescribed work environment, such as Francesca's or Studio 14B in which the all-inclusive is a standard form of service (and where the management has clear expectations of the kind of service that the client should be provided), workers will nevertheless tend to circumvent or improvise upon prescribed work practice in subtle ways, through implementing work practice based on 'self-paced production' (see Hassard, 1989). Rochelle explains:
[w]hen it comes down to all-inclusives, you get some management that like you to do everything, you know, like the works and the girls will modify that, you know, to what you think it’s worth and I guess to a certain extent it depends on the client too in what you can get away with.

(Rochelle)

Workers are able to use the massage service to their advantage within the encounter as a means to arouse the client and encourage the negotiation of extras. Thus, some workers will invest time and effort in perfecting massage skills and often comment that it is preferable to arouse a client through a sensual massage than have to perform hand relief, oral or indeed intercourse for longer than is necessary. The massage service can be a work activity that requires a level of skill or expertise. At one Christchurch massage parlour in particular, workers are paid a nominal fee by management for providing clients with a full body sensual massage. However, in addition to the massage, workers may only provide hand or oral ‘extras’ for which they charge the price that they would normally charge in a ‘full sex’ massage parlour.

[i]t’s unbelievable but the massage just does all the work, I give them the best massage that I can every time. You see at the first place I worked I was trained to massage because the massage was part of the service, you know real sensual stuff, and I mean, we got paid for massaging because the only extras you could offer was a hand job, there was no full sex work there. And so you’d give them this wonderful sensual massage and make them want to have that bit extra, well at least make it so that they were desperate for something more! (laughs), and so when it comes to doing full sex work here, then I find that using those massage skills means that I can get them just as horny without having to bonk them or give them a blow job for all that time.

(Shelley)

Sam explains how providing a massage made her feel more like a service worker than a ‘hooker’:

[w]e got paid to massage which didn’t make you feel like a hooker so much. So you didn’t just have to try and get them horny to get paid. You were actually providing what I thought was a good service and the
The time spent massaging a client can also be used as a means to ‘break the ice’ for both the worker and the client.

*I always start with a massage. I know some girls might try and skip it or just give a quick rub but I think that it shows that you are in control of the situation ... you can tell them when to roll over. I don’t like being with a client who doesn’t want a massage. I just can’t jump into bed and start doing it (laughs). I’m a bit too conservative for that, I need to be able to relax myself into it too and the massage gives you an excuse to take your clothes off.*

(Claudia)

*I do prefer to give a massage beforehand, it gets them ready, relaxes them and turns them on. If you massage well, a sensuous massage, it does the trick every time.*

(Barbara, parlour worker)

In this way, sex workers quickly learn to develop a work rhythm and ‘repertoire’ of services that they feel comfortable performing that allows them to construct meaning to their work, satisfy client demands efficiently with the least mental and physical risk or harm to the worker for maximum reward. This often means keeping sexual activities, particularly actual penetrative sex, to a minimum, since workers ideally seek to maximise their income for a minimum of effort (sexual contact) (see Brewis & Linstead, 2000a; O’Neill, 1997). Desiree, the self-employed prostitute in O’Connell Davidson’s study, talks about using techniques to get clients to orgasm quickly, such as practising exercises that strengthen her pelvic floor muscles so that she may literally ‘milk’ the client (1995). Rebecca, a parlour worker, insists that by giving her clients oral prior to penetrative sex, she can guarantee that they will quickly reach orgasm. Laura claims that by getting on ‘top’ during sex she is able to control the client’s orgasm. Other activities that fall into the category of managing the encounter include faking penetrative sex, which is sometimes referred to as ‘trick sex’, in which the worker uses her lubricated thighs to bring the client to climax, and thus avoid vaginal penetration. Alicia, Sarita and Rochelle comment on their techniques:
of the seven clients that I did last Saturday, I only really had sex with two of them, and they were all full jobs, but you can bring them off with your thighs and they don’t notice it, but you’ve got to really get them aroused beforehand and they just don’t notice.

(Alicia, parlour worker)

The Asian clients are usually tiny so I’ll usually have to hold on with my hand so that the condom doesn’t slip off for a start and then I use my thighs to bring them off, they don’t realise it, because it can be just as good just as effective if you do it properly.

(Sarita)

I can’t say that I really have any two clients the same. They’re all different even the ones that just want to hammer away at you, some will cum quicker if you squeeze your legs around them, some if you tickle their balls or their bum, or if you groan loudly, ‘yeah baby yeah’, talk dirty to them ...

(Rochelle, parlour worker)

Cavendish (1982), talks about ‘time rituals’ that are used by workers to make the day or shift go faster. Like the workers in these studies, sex workers also suffer from boredom from the mundanity of certain aspects of their job, and therefore develop ‘coping’ strategies for inside and outside ‘room time’. Furthermore, the requirement by management for workers to remain with clients for the duration of the time segment that has been purchased, places pressure on the worker to ‘fill-time’ once the sexual service has been completed. Often clients will book longer time segments than they actually need and time can hang heavily upon the worker.

If they’ve paid for an hour you’ve got to try and give the hour because the manager doesn’t like you getting them out too early, and the place I’m at now you get fined for leaving the room too early, something stupid like that.

(Rochelle)

Sarita confirms the sentiments of many workers that clients generally need no more than a half hour segment:
I personally think that they like to book an hour because it makes them feel like a stud you know, men are funny like that, when really they're just wasting their money because mostly it's all over, you know, including your massage in twenty minutes. So you're left with all this time on your hands, and you just don't want to be with some clients any longer than you have to.

(Sarita)

Thus, workers often find that they need to implement ‘time fillers’ to occupy or entertain the client for the rest of the time segment that they have purchased. These strategies vary between workers and can include making conversation with the client, giving the client a rub down in the shower, a complimentary body slide, a sensual massage, a striptease, the use of mechanical sexual stimulants, and taking a bath/spa with the client. Suzie, Louise and Trish talk about how they approach 'time-filling':

If course you've got to make them think that what you're doing is something special, something just for him, that little bit of intimacy, and not the fact that you've got another twenty minutes to go. It's all about keeping everyone happy, the client, the manager, and you, yourself.

(Suzie)

Actually massage can be quite boring, depends on the client. Sometimes you can talk away, or then you get the ones who don't say anything and that's when you've got to think about stuff, shopping lists, plan out the week's meals, and the same while your bonking, but you obviously have to make out that your enjoying it and that he's really pressing all the right buttons, otherwise if you're just lying there waiting for him to finish, it could go on forever.

(Louise, parlour worker)

Of course you want to get out of there as soon as possible, once it's all over, and if they've booked in for an hour then you've got to give them an hour, and I can tell you that that's the difference between seeing a client once and getting him to request you again, and if you can't string your hour out then you're not doing it properly.

(Trish, parlour worker)
In general, workers comment that they have a good sense of timing in terms of room time. Experienced workers such as Liz and Trish claim to develop a particular rhythm to their work, knowing for instance how to divide up room time, how long to give a massage or sexual stimulation such as hand relief before they will embark upon ‘full sex’. Orr (1990) refers to such skilled practice of workers as tacit knowledge, which can be the both the ability to do things without being able to explain them completely and also the inability to learn to do them from a theoretical understanding (170). Ecstavasia comments that it is imperative for a worker to develop a good sense of ‘timing’, to know exactly how long the client encounter has been running and how long it is likely to take without letting this intrude on the encounter ‘because nobody likes a clock-watcher’ (1993: 187). The issue of time being money is at the core of sex work and ‘seasoned’ workers develop a good sense of ‘timing’ as part of their repertoire of skills. Liz comments:

"This job is more than just fucking the client, that’s just a misconception that’s out there. Something I learned pretty damn quick from the girls I worked with was that you don’t fuck for half an hour, you might want to do that at home, but not with a client. You soon tune in and develop some good work skills from the other girls and invent a few of your own as you go along."

(Liz)

Similarly, Trish talks about her innate sense of timing:

"You try not to look at your watch or if you do you do it slyly, I mean you’re supposed to be interested and the last thing you want is for the client to lose interest and then have to start all over again to get the damn thing hard! (laughs). I don’t know, I find, especially with the regulars, that you can be spot on with time without even looking at your watch, and even with the others I’m never usually too far off."

(Trish, parlour worker)

Workers can structure ‘room-time’ or their day by breaking time into ‘digestible’ segments, making the job more psychologically manageable (see Ditton, 1979; Roy 1990). Routinising their work can enable sex workers to ‘switch off’ and make work more bearable, particularly in specialist services such as submissive work, Penny explains:
When I'm doing submissive work it's mostly verbal humiliation as I'm not worthy to have sex with the master so mostly I tend to do oral and I just switch off during it all and sometimes it can be hard not to laugh (laughs), because I just can't believe some of this shit that they get off on ... you know, so you have to have some sort of game going on in your head.

(Penny)

Laurie prefers to liken her detachment or management of work to that of a nurse:

You have to cut off with your client. Andy, my partner asked me how I could have sex with a client and not get off. I said it's actually easy, you just think of it as a motion, part of the job you are doing and not as a sexual thing, a bit like a nurse would I suppose you know when she has to wipe someone's butt.

(Laurie)

The 'time fillers' that workers use in the room also serve as preparatory routines or rituals that function as 'markers of separation'. For example, showering prior to and after any activity or service, the provision of a massage service, and the use/application of lubrication for intercourse signals the entry or exit from work. Similarly, a sex worker will create distinctions with her body, for example, permitting certain types of sexual contact for the client encounter and keeping others for personal lives only. The services that a worker provides during 'room-time' may vary and reflect the personal preference of the individual worker, the type of massage parlour (niche market), and client demand. Though workers often contend that the sexual services they provide are purely instrumental, devoid of any intimate meaning and a natural function undertaken as part of the job, workers will, however, make a decision in their own mind as to what they are prepared to perform or provide during the course of their work. In this way, they ascribe certain acts as private or intimate and others as instrumental for work. Similarly, prostitution studies have found that sex work is not quite as mechanical as workers claim, since work appears to be subject to a worker's tolerances and intolerances, resulting in the diverse individual responses to sex work practice (Brewis & Linstead, 2000a; Day, 1996; McKeeganey & Barnard, 1996; O'Neill, 2001; Perkins, 1991; Phoenix, 1999). For example, Tiffany considers herself to
be a ‘conservative hooker’ because she offers a small range of services that she describes as ‘straight sex’ or ‘work sex’.

_I think that I’m quite straight forward and conservative with what I do in the room and that might be a funny thing for a sex worker to say, but yeah, I probably don’t do anything out of the ordinary or too out there that I don’t feel comfortable with and I’m pretty much the same in my own personal life, and I generally let the clients know that that’s what I do and what it’s going to be like you know, conservative, nothing too out there or raunchy, just normal straight forward type of sex._

(Tiffany)

Sex workers offer their clients a category of services that they are comfortable to provide in a particular encounter, dispelling the myth that a client hires a worker’s body do with as he wishes (Day, 1990; McKeeganey & Barnard, 1996; O’Connell Davidson, 1994; O’Neill, 1997). Suzie explains that she is not entirely comfortable stepping outside her comfort zone of services, particularly if it means crossing what she considers to be the boundary between work sex and personal or recreational sex.

_A lot of guys will ask to go down on you and I will say as long as you use a dental dam. Well that’s a cert that they’ll usually say no and to me that’s a bonus as that is more of a private thing for me to do, you know, I don’t particularly like to let them do it._

(Suzie, parlour worker)

Furthermore, sex workers also claim that they apply the same principles to the demands of massage parlour management. For example, Laurie found that she was unable to perform/provide services required by massage parlour management and client demands. Like Claudia, Laurie prefers to perform ‘straight’ sex or ‘conservative’ sexual services. Her solution was to move onto another parlour that suited her approach to work:

_It wasn’t just going in and just having oral or just having sex, it was a lot of fantasy, dress-up role play which I find quite strange because I’ve never been able to wiggle my butt in front of my own man let alone putting on a performance around the room with a french maid or horny_
neighbour outfit, and there's the B&D side of things and strip shows and the doubles, bi-doubles. I went into the dungeon twice and that was it for me after I tried out being a submissive. I just wanted to do the straight sex thing, but we were told that we had to have our own sex toys which we had to use on the clients and ourselves if we wanted to work there, and I'm just not into all that.

(Laurie, parlour worker)

The request for sexual (and other) services or acts made by clients reveal a diverse variety of tastes and needs (Scambler, 1997). Faced with such requests, the attitude of sex workers to a certain extent, remains somewhat instrumental while at the same time careful to maintain some form of ‘code of practice’ or professionalism. In their study of street workers, McKeeganey and Barnard (1996) noted that when negotiating services, a worker’s decision was affected by three considerations: the worker’s preferences in services, the nature of the client’s request and the amount of money on offer. The service that subsequently took place was more than often based on a compromise between these three things (McKeeganey & Barnard, 1996; Perkins, 1991). In the massage parlour context, additional variables such as work policy, all-inclusives, competition between workers, the financial pressures of individual workers, the particular niche market in which the parlour and worker are located and so forth, affect a worker’s decision. Jordan (1997) and McClintock (1993) argue that typical depictions of the sex worker/client encounter place the client in the ‘active role’ and the sex worker in the ‘passive role’ (victim). Thus, in this depiction the client pays, hires and uses the sex worker, and ‘she gets paid/she gets laid/she gets used’ (Jordan 1997:66). Though ‘moral campaigners’ often tend to concentrate on the ways in which men use women’s bodies and the subjective consequences of selling sexual services (or one’s body), sex workers will, however, tend to define themselves as ‘entrepreneurs’ with the freedom to chose where and when they work and the kind of services that they will offer their clientele (Day, 1996; McKeeganey & Barnard, 1996; Scambler, 1997; Skilbrei, 2001).

We say what goes. There are clients who think that they’ve paid a fee and they own you for that hour or whatever and we see it that we provide them with a service so I will usually just say what I don’t do or whatever, say it politely but firmly and go on from there. Usually they are happy with that and that works probably because I have their cash!

(Brook, parlour worker)
Some clients might get a bit pushy and try to stick it somewhere they shouldn’t. I’m quite firm, you have to be. I am as soon as I go in there. I won’t let them do anything I don’t want to do.

(Laura, parlour worker)

However, there is a thin line between a professional approach to work and ‘room time’ and an impersonal or mechanical approach to sex work. Claudia explains how she manages this dilemma:

*I think generally the way I go about it, go about working, is the way that I consider to be professional, in my grooming, my attitude and just the way I try to carry myself and the way I talk to the clients, you know, the common courtesies to make their visit more comfortable and enjoyable and if you carry that into the room then it makes things much easier.*

(Claudia)

Sex work (room time) is often viewed simply in terms of the client/sex worker encounter and the transaction of services and monies. However, in the organisation of massage parlour work, room time is far more complex than simply the dyadic relationship of client and sex worker. Room time is fundamental to the operation and success of a massage parlour and, therefore, the issue of time and service is consistently being contested between management and workers. However, ‘room time’ must remain flexible to a certain extent in order for workers and management to reach an understanding/compromise on the standard of sex work practice. For sex workers, the management of room time represents the management of identity and is subject to their individual notions/ideas of work. Indeed, both sex workers and clients suggest that there is no standardised formula/process of sex work, and even prearranged services like all-inclusives can be subject to the idiosyncrasies of workers and clients.

Furthermore, situational factors can often override rules pertaining to time management in a massage parlour. Indeed, for contemporary market-based businesses, the organisation of time often tends to be less finite and determined since it is subject to production processes and the fallible judgements of management or planners and working rhythms of individual workers (see Hassard, 2000). For example, managers and receptionists will encourage workers to get clients in and out as quickly as possible when they are faced with a staff
shortage on a busy shift. For example, I recall a busy Saturday afternoon in which only one worker (Alicia) turned up for the shift. Between us, we 'juggled' seven bookings before staff 'reinforcements' arrived. In this situation, I was reliant upon Alicia's skills as a worker to be able to process the clients as quickly as possible, but most importantly, not to the detriment of the quality of service, thus a form of 'temporal autonomy' was introduced (Hassard, 2000). My role as manager in this situation was to perform some of the tasks usually undertaken by workers, such as installing clients in the spa, providing refreshments, and directing them to a room and shower. Under these circumstances, Hassard suggests that time-structuring of work practice is shared between management and workers whereby semi-autonomy is handed over to workers, who are then left to develop their own rhythm of working (2000).

On that day Alicia and I worked as a team, invoking a flexible approach to the organisation of parlour work. This meant trusting Alicia to manage room time and ensure clients received a particular standard of service. The buzzer just kept going didn’t it (laughs), but we got them all through. Yeah, it was a good day and everyone went away happy. I really like working like that you know, get them in and out quickly. I think that that’s what most of them want anyway, not what B is always banging on about, all this keeping them in the room till their time is up crap. I just hate having to work like that. I just want to be out of there as soon as it’s finished, as long as you know what you’re doing, you can have them in and out as quick as a flash, and happy!

(Alicia, parlour worker)

The Shift Manager's Time: organising parlour work
A massage parlour manager’s or receptionist’s practical application of management policy and disciplinary procedures is dictated to a large degree by a number of factors. Decisions can be situationally influenced and can vary somewhat between managers and receptionists. Wilson (1989) alludes to an approach of implicit practice in mainstream work when one is confronted with imposing authority on people or in situations that are unpredictable. Wilson suggests that each particular situation defines the limits of action, often rendering
formal organisational or workplace goals and regulations inept and necessitating the use of improvisation as a means to ‘take charge’ (1989). For example, decisions can be influenced by the variability of temporal orders in a massage parlour, the management structure/hierarchy and communication infrastructure, the experience or familiarity of sex work practice and culture of managers and receptionists, and the impact of market fluctuations.

My first experience of working in a massage parlour took place at Studio 14B, a central Christchurch massage parlour where I was employed as a ‘shift manager’. At first, my lack of experience in the sex industry seemed to be more problematic for the other managers rather than the sex workers. The massage parlour was owned by a former sex worker, and considered to be one of the ‘up-market’ massage parlours in Christchurch. It had a rigid hierarchical organisational structure, comprising of five shift managers, an overall manager and the owner. The daily running of the parlour was undertaken by the ‘shift managers,’ who were responsible to the ‘senior’ manager. In essence, we were what you could call ‘glorified receptionists’ since neither of us were registered as managers with the police. However, to circumvent legislation and to avoid the cost of licensing each manager, we were listed as non profit directors of the company.

Workplace policy at Studio 14B was compiled into a book and referred to by shift managers and sex workers as ‘the Bible’. This comprised of a comprehensive guide to the expectations of work practice and protocol such as ladies’ presentation, the consumption of alcohol, tobacco and drugs on the premises, in-room fees (tips or extras), standards of personal hygiene, behaviour and presentation, the ideal contents for ‘work kits’, the cleaning duties or responsibilities of workers, issues of client confidentiality, and the imposition of fines.31 As a newcomer to the industry, I found that having some form of written ‘policy’ to refer to made it easier to understand parlour protocol and, therefore, have an idea when certain rules were or could be broken, and when I was expected to implement fines for non-compliance of work procedure. In general, massage parlours, to varying degrees, have a set of regulations or guidelines to structure and organise sex work practice. These rules are generally disseminated verbally to the new workers by the manager or receptionist on duty, and may appear in written form like the Studio 14B Bible

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30 I did not receive any complaints from clients that day.
31 Appendix 1.2 gives two examples of behaviour expectations from the Studio 14B ‘Bible’
or, like at Dior's, as a two page document pinned to the wall in the staff kitchen/common room.

At Studio 14B, all the managers apart from myself had either worked or were still working as sex workers ('jumping the counter')32. In general, managers are expected to refrain from jumping the counter in order to achieve some distance and separation from both workers and clients.33 At Dior's (a less 'exclusive' massage parlour), where I am currently employed as a receptionist, only one of the five receptionists employed has previous sex work experience; thus, there is a clear definition between management and workers. Generally, managers/receptionists in massage parlours tend to be ex-sex workers, or semi/unskilled women without any previous management experience outside the sex work industry. Indeed, all of the shift managers at Studio 14B had previous experience of sex work (some were rumoured to jump the counter now and then). However, knowledge of sex work practice or experience of the sex work industry enables a manager or receptionist to problem solve a 'tricky' situation based on the 'community memory' of problems and solutions derived from their own experience in the industry (Orr, 1990). Though such knowledge carries little importance in the general labour market, an intimate feel and understanding of sex work helps in improvising organisational strategies specific to the parlour context. However, actions based on individual intuition can often conflict with the bureaucratic system of organisation in a massage parlour. For example, establishing indulgency patterns with workers or reciprocal relationships contravenes work place practice but enables the daily operations of the parlour to continue effectively.

Remuneration for a shift manager or receptionist of a massage parlour tends to be particularly poor and does not reflect the long unsociable work hours. Often receptionists, managers and shift managers are paid 'informally' (under the table) to compensate for this. Thus, massage parlour managers and receptionists are essentially part of what Rosenberg and Lapidus (1999) call the 'insecure workforce'. For contingent or insecure workers, their employment is conditional on 'product' or market demand, making their jobs uncertain and short term. In addition, they are also highly vulnerable to

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32 Jumping the counter essentially means 'still working' however, the general rule is that during the hours that a woman is working as a managers/receptionist she refrains from sex work, and therefore avoid conflict with other workers on the shift. A manager is meant to be impartial when booking clients.

33 However, at Studio 14B prior to the a change in senior management and during a slump in business, shift managers were regularly 'jumping the counter' when workers failed to turn up for shifts. These managers were considered to be rallying for the 'cause' (of the business).
unemployment. In terms of the massage parlour, there is the added twist of the 'quasi-legality' of the market, the ambiguity of regulatory frameworks, and the further encumbrance of the stigma attached to prostitution, not to mention their precarious 'employment' status.

In circumstances of market uncertainty, Rosenberg and Lapidus suggest that employers will ideally seek more flexible employment arrangements in order to raise productivity, lower labour costs and transfer more of the risk of economic downturns and uncertainty onto the employees (1999). This manifests itself in the informal employment of managers or receptionists and, in some cases, reception duties are passed onto sex workers on each shift. This precarious position for receptionists and managers can result in rivalry between each other to secure their positions. At Studio 14B, for example, competition between shift managers manifested itself in asserting the individual notions of professional work practice of each shift manager and 'narking' on each other. Thus, a process of polarising work performance took place between managers and the workers on opposing shifts. It is not uncommon for divisions to emerge between the workers on different shifts, for example, day girls and night girls. Thus, competition or rivalry between shift managers became more prevalent as communication between managers became less frequent and client numbers declined. The uncertain or precarious position of a shift manager or receptionist can lead to decisions predicated upon 'self-preservation' at the expense of their staff. For example, a receptionist or shift manager under performance pressure from senior management or the owner/s may chose to lower their standards to process a larger number of clients through the parlour (to increase the amount of door fees or massage time sold). This becomes problematic for workers who must then entertain drunk or obnoxious clients.

It is not uncommon in parlours for managers or receptionists to be paid on a commission or 'bonus' system based on the number of clients booked into the parlour. Catherine, a part-time manager, comments about how this system affects the decision making of managers and receptionists:

[s]ome receptionists and managers in some parlours feel purely responsible to the owners and don't really or can't really give a stuff about the girls because they have to put through so many jobs to get paid, and so you can get the situations where girls are having problems with clients and the management are not backing them up.
As a manager, my attitude is that without the girls we didn’t get money through the door and therefore you look after your girls and I’ve gained a lot of respect within the working community for that which makes my job now a lot easier.

(Catherine, manager and sex worker)

A reliable form of communication in a hierarchical organisation is important for efficiency and to avoid ambiguity in terms of the organisation’s goals and objectives. This same principle is also relevant to the organisation of a massage parlour. In a situation where a business has a number of managers or receptionists employed, then effective communication between each one can be haphazard. For example, Studio 14B was organised into two shifts each day, the first began at 10.00am and the second at 6.00pm, though the end of the second shift would vary according to the day and season. Initially I worked two evening shifts per week and would generally come into contact with one shift manager on a regular basis. I would meet the others at general staff or management meetings, or by covering another shift. Thus, at Studio 14B communication between shift managers tended to be orchestrated through a diary that was kept in the manager’s office. Thus, a diary was used to bridge the communication gap between managers, to document shift hours for managers, write memos for the ‘senior manager’, document activities of disgruntled or troublesome clients, and as a means to notify the next shift manager if a worker intended to be late or absent.

Though the diary may seem a primitive form of communication, it did prove useful in bridging the gap between shift managers and in conveying messages and memos. A problem faced by many modern organisations, according to Grint (2000), is a fundamental need for the synchronisation or the temporal co-ordination of the functionally segmented or specialised parts of an organisation (2000:30). Further, Adam (1995) suggests that the more flexible or unpredictable the work patterns of staff, the more time has to be spent on the task of synchronisation between members of the organisation or team (104). The same point is taken up by Barley (1988), who suggests that ‘the idea that people now tend to inhabit differently timed social worlds draws attention to how temporal orders support patterns of integration and differentiation and thereby influence the dynamics of cohesion

34 Generally hours would be: Monday to Wednesday at 2.00-3.00am and Thursday to Saturday at 4.00-7.00am and Sunday at 1.00am
I think that Studio 14B was one of the better run parlours that I've worked. At the time I might have said something different though! (laughs) We had a lot of girls working there and some were real professionals and I suppose that also came down to the parlour too. I mean, we had some pretty high standards and we had a bloody good reputation when I look back, and it was our job as managers to make sure that we kept to them and that could be quite a challenge at times, but at least it was run professionally. We had our jobs to do on the shift and you got on with it, and you knew what was going on, and that's real important. We would have management meetings for when things needed to be sorted or someone had to be sorted so you knew where Kristin (the owner) was coming from, and I mean, there's nothing worse than having to hear from the girls what has been going on. The managers sort of stuck together in that way, in a kind of 'us' and 'them' way, like you came on shift and got the low down from the day manager, what's been going on and if there's anything you need to know about the girls or anything, and then there was the diary to see what has been happening on other shifts, and you could guarantee what was down in the book didn't always correspond with what the girls had to say either! (laughs).

(Sally, shift manager)

For shift managers at Studio 14B, communication entailed management or general staff meetings, the 'diary' and the odd phone call from the senior manager. As management meetings became less frequent, the diary became the main form of communication between shift managers. However, the diary as a means of communication alone proved problematic since, in the absence of face to face interaction it became difficult to provide sufficient information to enlighten or update managers or provide rapid feedback. The diary on its own was unable to establish and maintain the kind of multidimensional and robust relationship that Nohria and Eccles (1992) refer to as being necessary for effective and co-ordinated interaction in work situations of uncertainty and ambiguity. Among shift managers, the diary could be used as a propaganda tool or a means to humble each other's work practice. The senior manager used the diary as the primary means of
critiquing work practice and behaviour of the shift managers and as a coercive incentive for their commitment to work (see Tilly & Tilly 1998). The diary was not a particularly discreet form of communication, since some of the sex workers would often sneak into the office and read it, and shift managers were known to share the contents of the diary entries with the workers on their shift. The decrease in the frequency of management meetings at Studio 14B lead to feelings of alienation or isolation for shift managers. Consequently, a lack of cohesion and a subsequent increase in conflict over work practice ensued between managers, senior management and workers. Managers began to form alliances and identify more with the women on their shift than with each other. Sally comments:

*I suppose we made up our own way of running the shift in the end didn’t we? Kirstin (the owner) seemed to lose interest in the place and basically left the running up to Barbie (senior manager), not that she was incompetent or anything, but there just wasn’t that bond there any more and you ended up having more in common with the girls on the shift than with any of the other managers, and I suppose it’s because we spent more time with the girls and never saw each other very much other than at shift change over. It was a pity because that was a really good place to work when we were a team.*

(Sally, shift manager)

Competency or notions of ‘professionalism’ among the managers at Studio 14B was measured by the ability to control their staff (and likewise at Dior’s). Manager’s duties or responsibilities included ensuring that assigned shift chores were done by workers\(^\text{35}\), imposing and collecting monies (fines, shift fees and bonds), settling disputes among the staff, supervising workers’ presentation and behaviour with clients, monitor ‘room time’ etc., in addition to the general reception and bar duties. Monitoring the different ‘times’ in operation in a massage parlour is an important aspect of a manager’s or receptionist’s job; for example, the punctual arrival and departure of workers, and ensuring that the time workers begin and finish their transactions with clients or time segments according to the time that has been purchased. Managers attempt to monitor or control workers’ ‘down time’ (spare time in between clients), as a means to get ‘chores’ done.

\(^{35}\) At Studio 14B sex workers were expected to do laundry, dishes, clean/vacuum communal and private rooms, empty rubbish and condom bins at the end of their shift.
My experience as a shift manager at Studio 14B corresponds with that of Sally, in that I found myself bonding more with the women on my shift in the absence of face to face interaction with the other shift managers and my subsequent sense of isolation. Zerubavel suggests that when people perceive themselves to occupy a parallel flow with others (experiencing the same sequences, durations, temporal locations, and the same rates of recurrence of events), then they begin to develop a sense of commonality based on a sense of sharing a set of circumstances etc. (cited in Barley 1992 :127). Furthermore, according to Barley (1992), this sense of commonality is further enhanced when the temporal order of this group erects boundaries that set the members of the group apart from others in their immediate surroundings, for example, the day girl/night girl divisions among workers in a massage parlour (in addition to the social stigma associated with sex work). The same divisions or alliances occurred at Studio 14B, including the shift managers, when communication between management became less frequent.

Rivalry between shifts is also not uncommon in a parlour setting because of the competitive nature of sex work. A break down in management communications at Studio 14B gradually resulted in inconsistencies in terms of approaches to control staff tending towards individualised or 'indulgency' methods (Tilly & Tilly, 1998) rather than co­ordinated systems of discipline. Under these circumstances, managers' allegiances can become somewhat unclear.

The role of a shift manager or receptionist can be best described as that of a ‘go-between’, a broker (Wacquant, 1996), representing the interests of the owner, workers and clients. This is achieved through a certain amount of improvisation and negotiation of the hierarchical and bureaucratic massage parlour system, in addition to the different networks operating in a massage parlour. Like any other work place, the massage parlour utilises the labour mechanism of incentives for organising work (see Tilly & Tilly, 1998). Tilly and Tilly have characterised this by the combination of three classes of incentive (coercion, compensation and commitment), which may vary in emphasis between work organisations (1998). In the massage parlour, tighter controls (coercion), are used as an incentive to organise workers in the absence of wage or contractual agreements (compensation), or the intrinsic value of sex work (commitment). However, a manager or receptionist who attempts to wield commitment, compensation and coercion in an attempt to extract effort from workers will often face subversion by workers.
Managers and receptionists in a massage parlour will often 'do deals' or bargain with workers to establish an informal pattern of reciprocity (obligation) or 'trust arrangement' as a means of organising work. This often means allowing workers more autonomy over their work routines which in turn, involves greater trust, particularly from the employer or management's perspective (Tilly, 1998). In practical terms, massage parlours can only survive if they have sex workers to provide sexual services; thus, bargaining with workers in some cases becomes an integral part of parlour management. The more management can guarantee or secure an income for sex workers through their regular client base/popularity, the less parlour management have to bargain with workers. In addition, 'bargains' or 'patterns of indulgency' negotiated between workers and managers or receptionists are also guided by sex market and labour market fluctuations, changes in the informal policing arrangements of the market, and the hierarchical structure of the parlour.

At Dior's, sex workers and receptionists organise 'deals' around the set rules or policy of the parlour and tend to operate under an 'understanding' between the parties involved. For example, sex workers expect the receptionist to screen clientele (to see if they are too drunk or obnoxious to enter the parlour), to align with sex workers in the case of awkward clients, and to 'evict' lingering clientele (rescue workers). The manager monitors the formalities of client/sex worker introductions and intervenes when clients fail to choose a worker after an 'appropriate' period of time (allowing each worker enough opportunity to entertain the client and sell herself). Thus, the manager can eliminate unnecessary client contact outside the room for sex workers, freeing up workers to procure more work ('jobs') during busy periods. In turn, workers agree to present themselves for their designated shift, provide a standard of service that the massage parlour expects from workers (particularly in terms of 'all-inclusive' and 'special packages') and agree to maintain the rooms according to management rules. The 'deals' or bargains that managers and receptionists strike with workers do not guarantee commitment or reliability from workers, but serve to alert workers to the obligations and reciprocities that operate within each shift.

At Studio 14B, the hierarchical structure of the parlour underwent some organisational change when Abe, the owner's husband took over the daily running of the massage parlour. Abe attempted to shift the organisational system of Studio 14B from one of rigid discipline (coercion), which required the employment of shift managers or receptionists to

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36 This involves disposing of condoms, tissues, wrappers and so forth after each job and to set out the bed and linen for the next job in line with the parlour's room layout.
oversee these regulations and the implementation of fines and bonds, to an approach of self regulation by sex workers (indulgency)\textsuperscript{37}. The new manager was keen to encourage more of a co-operative approach between sex workers and management in the organisation of the parlour. This resulted in an attempt to combine some cost cutting and sex worker integration/involvement in the day to day running of the business. The aim was to establish loyalty and commitment from workers that would manifest itself in a professional approach to work. In this system, sex workers were required to oversee the daily duties and responsibilities of the massage parlour that would normally be undertaken by a paid employee on the day shifts (receptionist or shift manager), such as telephone and reception duties. This work was carried out without remuneration and in return the fining system was abolished in favour of an ‘honesty’ policy, whereby sex workers were encouraged to take responsibility for their work practice and punctuality. The women at Studio 14B were also encouraged to contribute ideas or make suggestions for improvements to customer service and work conditions.

This co-operative or ‘trust’ approach at Studio 14B, although well intentioned, failed to improve the general work practice of workers in terms of reliability and punctuality. In addition, many workers complained of feeling alienated by what they perceived to be favouritism exhibited by the manager as well as a general lack of structure to workplace organisation. It would be fair to say that on a number of occasions I was greeted by chaos at the beginning of my shifts in the evenings, with shift sheets incomplete, general duties ignored (particularly the laundry). Furthermore, continuous in-fighting among groups of women, the steady disappearance of bar stock, frequently inaccurate totals for door fees at the end of a shift, poor punctuality or women just not turning up for shifts, and a decline in regular clientele, resulted in the reintroduction of the fining system and a moderate form of the previous managerial structure. This is not to say that a hierarchical or bureaucratic structure (such as the one previously used at Studio 14B or the one currently operating at Dior’s) is the ideal approach to the organisation of massage parlour work. However, parlour management in general find that they need to adjust the organisation of their businesses (including their employment practices) to fit the particular market conditions in which they operate. Furthermore, the fluctuating market can also, to a certain extent, dictate the approach to organising work in a massage parlour. O’Connell Davidson argues that when there is low and/or fluctuating demand for sexual services, owners have an interest in

\textsuperscript{37} Fritz sacked all the shift managers. I remained as a shift/assistant manager and had the number of shifts I worked increased.
organisational forms which force sex workers to shoulder the cost of running the massage parlour and enable them to keep trade ticking over (1998 :20),
section two

'Down Time'

In the previous section, the issue of organising and controlling sex work in a massage parlour has been explored specifically through the struggle over time. In this section, I will argue that the 'down time' in a massage parlour is also key to the organisation of sex work practice in that workers 'learn to do what they do'. The 'down time' in a massage parlour is often viewed by sex workers and management as the space in between clients, the non-profit making time. One woman I worked with once described it as a 'no-man's time'. It is a break from time spent with clients and an opportunity to take a mental and physical break from paid sex work. It can be time spent sitting around in the communal area of the massage parlour (the kitchen or lounge area), eating, sleeping, smoking, chatting, grooming etc. In some massage parlours you can predict the 'down time' or lull in business and, therefore, sex workers and management can plan activities around this prediction. However, what at first appears to be mundane or empty blocks of time can actually be described as being an important component in the social organisation of sex work.

During this time, some temporal symmetry between workers is achieved and, therefore, it provides the opportunity for working knowledge to be socially distributed, pieced together, shared, or made sense of. Research on the organisation of work has shown that it is just as important if not more important to look at the role of 'non-work' activities or the informal arrangements and improvisation of workers when exploring the organisation of labour and work practice (Tilly & Tilly 1998; Orr 1990). Sex work literature so far has tended to concentrate more on the 'time' spent in the room in the client/sex worker encounter and the sexual services that are negotiated, bought, sold, performed, or the struggle for power in the client/sex worker relationship. Though this is important for understanding the organisational structures and relations operating within a massage parlour, it is also important to look at the time outside these blocks of 'bought time'. Often, time that is not paid for is dismissed as time that 'is spent sitting or pacing around in a state of restless
boredom’ (O’Connell Davidson 1995: 3). Similarly, Albert (2001), in her study of a Nevada brothel, describes ‘down time’ as ‘killing time’ between customers ‘the way that people kill time everywhere: smoking, snacking, crocheting, gossiping, napping, reading and playing cards’ (95). Non-paid time is considered ‘dead time’ and, therefore, dismissed; however, down time is in fact alive with multiple activities that contribute to the construction of massage time or ‘ladies’ time, and parlour time.

Having observed first hand a great deal of ‘down time’ in a massage parlour, I have come to liken what goes on during this time to Goffman’s (1990) front and back regions. It is in down time or ‘backstage’ ‘that illusions and impressions are openly constructed’ (1990: 114). Thus, by examining ‘time-outs’ we can ‘peek’ behind the on-stage performance of organisational drama and learn of the backstage work that keeps the production together (Van Maanen 1992: 58). Much of the backstage time is spent in communal staff areas, this is usually a kitchen or lounge area which is often off limits or hidden from clients. It is here that there is some synchronisation of the temporal worlds of workers and management, where there is some relaxation from ordinary work rules of on-stage performance. Van Maanen (1992) suggests that ‘time-outs’ or down time can be used to establish a distinctiveness of the group, further trust and establish a sense of commonalty or bonding (45). Indeed, workers can share stories and experiences as a means to pass time and, importantly, give meaning to the work that they do. Furthermore, the group or individuals are able to question authority through the relaxation of work rules, consequently this leads to the development of implicit procedural changes (albeit subtle in some cases) (Van Maanen 1992; Hassard 2000). However, workers are expected to be ready in ‘work mode’ as soon as the buzzer or bell is heard to signal the arrival of a client to the massage parlour and front stage roles are briefly assumed.

Piecing Together Knowledge

An important aspect to down time is the social distribution of knowledge. Sex work is essentially an oral culture in which information is generally passed on through networks. Generally, sex workers do not have the luxury of a training course or step by step manual on how to practice sex work, the best techniques for using some of the sex work paraphernalia or body maintenance and time saving strategies. It is through the social distribution of knowledge in periods of ‘down time’ that sex work is constructed, shaped

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1 At both Dior’s and Studio 14B a sensor is located at the door of the parlour and is common in other parlours in Christchurch as means to signal the arrival or departure of clients.
and reshaped by diverse actors. Workers must piece together an understanding from bits of experience, their own and others, in the absence of definitive information. Tilly and Tilly (1998) suggest that formal arrangements of work rely upon the informal arrangements to keep the business going. Basically, massage parlours can only survive if sex workers know what to do. It is the talk about work, the non-work, that actually gets the work done (Orr 1990: 174).

Tyler, a parlour worker comments:

*(i)*t’s more than just screwing. There’s this idea out there that all we do here is screw them and get the money, you know, but it’s more complicated than that. You don’t just lie back and spread your legs, there’s a loads of other stuff involved like learning to make it easier and safer for yourself. The way to make it all go smoothly, there’s the things you need to buy to set yourself up clothes and condoms and toys. You’ve got to find people to talk to, you need people you can listen to compare notes and laugh about some of them. You know what goes on for you in the room is the same for them. To make sure that what you’re doing you’re doing right so to speak, you’ve got to get things right in this, know what you’re doing or you’ll be taken advantage of. And there’s nothing worse than worrying on your own if you’ve got yourself a problem or a situation that you don’t know how to deal with it because at the end of the day it’s only really us girls that can know or understand what goes on in that room, so we have to help each other. No-one else will or give a shit. Management just want to make sure that they’ve got girls who’ll do the work and who can work.

(Tyler, parlour worker)

Thus, for Tyler, sex work involves improvisation, the piecing together of knowledge, skills, advice, the use of materials, location, experience, and whatever is at hand to do the job. Sex workers must develop tacit embodied skills, an intimate feel for the materials and techniques involved in sex work. Like Orr’s’ Xerox technicians (1990), sex workers negotiate problems or obstacles and improvise through whatever is at hand in order to reach a solution. Work is never made explicit and is generally left up to workers to decipher how it must or can be carried out and to develop their own rhythm or working to
reach solutions (1990: 174-175). Cora explains how she tries to share her work skills and knowledge with 'new girls':

\[\text{[t]he other day I was showing Katrina how give a blow job and I had her sucking on my finger. How else is she going to learn?}\]

(Cora, parlour worker/receptionist)

Beth talks about her tacit embodied skills:

\[\text{I never really thought of the mechanics of doing it, doing this job. Just something simple like getting a condom on and making it feel good and sexy and then what the hell do you do with the thing when it's finished. You don't think about the things in your private life. How long do you massage for, and realizing that there are different condoms for a blow job.}\]

(Beth, parlour worker)

In my role of shift manager and receptionist, I have hired or 'engaged' women for the massage parlour on the assumption that they will have some knowledge of the parlour environment, be familiar with general work policy, both formal (management) and informal (sex workers') workplace policy. My responsibility as a manager/receptionist is to make sure that each recruit gets a guided tour of the premises and is introduced to key guidelines of operation\(^2\): no smoking in the rooms, punctuality for shifts as well as 'room time', no drugs or alcohol on the premises, how to fill in a shift/time sheet, management expectations in terms of presentation, and the formal price system (all-inclusive prices, parlour specials). In addition, new workers are expected to gather information from the other women on the shift particularly in terms of the informal price system (extras), and what services are expected for parlour specials, such as, the 'red-light special at Dior's (a half hour massage with hand relief), or how workers negotiate and perform all-inclusives. Workers also need to develop a familiarity with their work environment; for example, the location of laundry cupboard, the spa baths, how the rooms and linen are set out (which can differ between

\(^2\) As I mentioned earlier, management in some parlours take it upon themselves to provide some form of training (Francesca's) or written guidelines (Studio 14B 'Bible') in order to assimilate workers as quickly and as effectively as possible. Thus, new recruits are informed of written policy. Often the communal area of the parlour can contain a notice board or alternatively, notices are stuck on the walls to distribute information or reminders regarding work policy, a list of housekeeping chores, standard dress requirements, the importance of punctuality, punishment for non-compliance (the fining system) and so forth.
parlours). In this case, a ‘buddy system’ is often deployed by management as a means to utilise the knowledge and skills of their sex workers.

The use of the ‘buddy system’ as a means of ‘training’ new and experienced workers to massage parlour work is often used by management. This entails an experienced (reliable) worker on the shift takes the new worker ‘under her wing’ and informs her of implicit working norms and patterns that sex workers develop in response to formal frameworks for work practice (parlour policy, formal legislation and informal policing procedures). This places the responsibility on the experienced worker to share important working knowledge and on the new worker to do research and acquire the necessary knowledge and skills. Thus, information relative to the particular parlour and clientele can be passed onto the new worker in a more personalised/private approach. The buddy system is particularly important in the case of workers who are new to the industry and have no experience of sex work. However, this is not an infallible method of training workers, since its success depends upon workers being able to synchronise their down times, which can be problematic because of the competing temporal worlds of clients. In addition, this system relies upon the integrity of the sex worker to give the novice accurate and safe information. Nevertheless, the ‘buddy system’ formally recognises and, indeed, encourages the sharing of information between workers by management as a means of integrating new workers into the work environment.

Massage parlours have a vested interest in workers receiving some basic training to provide them with some knowledge of specialist skills/services. For example, Penny (below), a first time sex worker, had to undergo training at Francesca’s parlour before she was able to go through with her first client in order to become acquainted with and proficient at some of the varied specialist services offered at this massage parlour. Workers are often expected to have some experience in the use of sexual toys and be able to perform some of these services proficiently. Indeed, at parlours such as Francesca’s and Eric’s, such skills ensure workers a larger number of 'jobs' and, therefore, a higher income. Penny talks about her experience of a training session:

\[\text{[t]hey (the owners) taught me how to massage, how to put condoms on, how to talk in the room. I was taught good work ethics, not a lot of managers or owners will do that. A friend also helped me heaps - she works at the same place. We’ve got this slave there and he strapped on this dildo and I got to practice to put a condom on him. I had only}\]
given oral once before in my entire life and hand relief, so it was all new. They taught me how to do it properly, how to suck properly and just the way you touch them (clients) under their balls, all sorts of erotic little things. The owners have worked, well they still work, and so they're keen for the girls to know what to do in the room and to give the clients value for money and for you to be professional about it all.
(Penny, parlour worker)

On the other hand, some managers/owners expect workers to find out what they need to know from others. Eric states:

[w]e train people really quickly, it is quite simple, you just affect them with all the other girls here.
(Eric, manager)

Rachel found that she learned a great deal from listening to fellow workers:

[i]n different places that I've worked, the management will give the low-down on what is expected, the girls will too. But that's just in conversations when you pick things up, like you'll hear about something that someone did and so on.
(Rachel, parlour worker)

Generally, sex workers are left to piece together what constitutes formal and informal work place policy and ideas of good and bad sex work practice. This is done through storytelling, or what is considered to be gossip in the communal area of a massage parlour. Women share their experiences with each other and compare the experiences of others with their own, just as Orr (1990) notes that Xerox technicians tended to service machines collectively, enabling each technician to work as efficiently as possible through communal discussions and shared information. Likewise, sex workers will share knowledge about clients that they have encountered. This often entails getting the job done to the satisfaction of the client and management, and results in maximum reward for minimum effort on the part of the sex worker. Tiffany comments that,

[g]enerally, I'd say that girls you work with will tell you about clients that they've been with, you know if they're hard work, what works with
them you know the sorts of things to make the job easier. I know that I
do, especially since most clients like to do the rounds with the girls and
course you get the ones who try to rip off condoms or who try to get
away without paying or who will try to barter you down in the room.
And so you tell the girl who’s going to go through with him to be
careful and to take the money first, you know, that sort of thing.
(Tiffany, parlour worker/escort)

Sam explains how important it is for workers to share information about 'problematic'
clients:

[y]ou get clients who will try and rip off condoms and like there was
this lady who hadn’t long been in the industry who had this experience
with a client. He ordered a bottle of wine and everything and she told
him, ‘just because I’m drinking don’t think I’m not onto it’. Well he
ripped it off and she didn’t know at first and when she realised she
nutted at him, but she gave him another chance and he did it again and
she didn’t realise until it was all over. She was a mess and I’ve seen
him back in here since, and we all stick by each other you know. He
came in and tried to do the same to another lady who was new, buy a
bottle of wine and I said to that girl, 'hey watch him, he rips off
condoms’. And he tried the same thing, but she was onto him and
ended up walking out the room, didn’t get any money off him or
anything but just walked out
(Sam, parlour worker)

Stories and anecdotes of work experience serve as a vehicle of community memory or a
knowledge base for workers, a means of sharing information gained in diagnosis with the
members of the group who were not there. This makes the stories told particularly apt for
the purpose of distributing knowledge because of their situated quality (Orr 1990: 175).
Sex workers have an interest in the characters and social dramas of their world and their
stories, therefore, serve to make both sense and ‘something’ of their world; that is, the
stories can present their actions as an achievement to be noticed. Health information and
general body maintenance skills are essential for the sex worker. Often I hear workers
referring to their bodies as 'tools of their trade. Thus, it makes sense that information is
shared concerning things like the use of safe sex paraphernalia such as sea sponges,
lubricants, condoms for oral sex, and which ones taste good. This information is also
distributed by the NZPC to massage parlours in the form of leaflets and a weekly parlour visit (if the parlour that will allow this) to replenish the supply box containing all the safe sex paraphernalia that is sold to sex workers at a reduced cost. However, not all workers are present during these visits; thus, information is generally passed on between workers. Rachel’s comment illustrates the importance of sharing information:

“There was this girl, it was her first night and she got her period and she didn’t know what to do so I told her to get a sea sponge and I said, look I’ve got one in my bag, I’ll cut it in half for you. She was a bit shocked that she had to continue to work through her period.”

(Rachel)

Holly explains how she was introduced to the ‘things’ necessary in sex work:

“I’d heard about condoms, but I’d never heard about lube so it was just one day that one of the girls where I worked, we were just talking and when she realised I hadn’t heard of it said to me ‘here’s some lube and these condoms are good, don’t use those ones, and these ones are good for oral.’”

(Holly)

Informal Supervision

Down time is used by both management and sex workers as a means to develop peer and management supervision. For management, down time can be used as a way to pursue the professional development of workers and address performance issues such as punctuality, presentation and behaviour, in addition to perhaps addressing a worker’s request rate (the number of requests a worker receives from regular clientele). Since massage parlour management are unable to monitor the ‘in room service’, they will listen to the gossip in the communal room pertaining to room time, in addition to monitoring request rates and client feedback. The reliability or quality of this gossip in the presence of the manager or receptionist depends of course upon the rapport that a manager/receptionist has with the workers on their shift as well as their ability to integrate themselves with the workers during down time. This entails partaking in down time rituals, having lunch or coffee in the

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3 The NZPC are funded by the Department of Health and therefore supply condoms etc. to the industry at a reduced cost, e.g. $2.00 for a box of 12 condoms which usually retail for over $12.00 in a pharmacy.
communal area and joining in with the gossip. To a large extent, it also depends on how the manager or receptionist interprets work place policy and implements their own form of indulgence patterns with workers.

Sex workers will also partake in a form of peer supervision in terms of measuring their own sex work practice with others. Sex workers tend to construct positive definitions of their working self and the work they do by designing a deviant frame (exemplar) against which they measure themselves and their work practice with others. This is done by actively resisting negative labels and transforming them into positive terms. They construct an identity that avoids the idea of deviant or immoral and opt to pursue an identity which presents 'professionalism'. Thus, the rather ambiguous position of sex workers in massage parlours in terms of their employment status (in that they are neither 'employed' nor legally freelance or self employed) has resulted in attempts by parlour workers - like other sex workers - to try to 'normalise' sex work by pursuing notions of 'professionalism', to construct a sex worker identity that allows them to justify and accept the work that they do. This often entails the setting up of divisions between what they consider to be 'good work' and 'bad work' in order to measure their own work practice/position. The criteria for a 'professional' or a 'good worker' does not differ greatly from that set out by employees in any other context: punctuality, reliability, efficiency, loyalty, and the ability to do the job proficiently. Both management and workers agree on key issues such as healthy and safe work practices, achieving a good client base (regulars), establishing good work limits or boundaries, the ability to display some detachment from work (do not work outside the parlour), establishing a good work routine (punctuality and reliability), and maintaining a high standard of personal grooming.

Claudia explains how she views her work:

\[ I \text{ always looked at it like a job where you had to be there on time and stay there, have your hours and have your stuff, be presented well and try to be professional. For me that meant feeling a bit more justified to have a certain amount of work ethic. It's my job, it's what I do, my work, what I do and this is life. } \]

(Claudia, parlour worker and escort)

Katherine comments on 'normalising' work:
You've got to treat it as a normal job otherwise you just lose the plot with it all. Turn up for your shift with all your stuff, get there on time, do your job and do it properly. Not just oh here's another one, you've got to switch on. Oh yes it's John and he likes so and so ...

(Katherine, parlour worker)

Liz explains how she defines good sex work:

It's got past the point of getting them and bonking them and that's it. Things have changed since I first started working fifteen years ago. Now you want them to come back, so you've got to spend the time talking to them, have a laugh, get to know what they like and what they want and remember it the next time you see them.

(Liz parlour worker)

Workers are able to show themselves as competent or professional practitioners to each other through sharing stories or experiences of work, as well as their ways of overcoming difficulties or problems. Further, Orr suggests that they are being competent practitioners through this actual presentation and circulation of knowledge (1990: 187). Thus, for workers these shared stories celebrate this identity to both themselves and to others, while at the same time creating another part of their identity, that of a member of a community (sex work), and a contributor of that community (professional) (Orr, 1990). In addition, the construction of the notion of professional practitioner by sex workers is further emphasised by workers comparing their work practice with another group or individual sex worker. Massage parlour workers often collectively differentiate their own professional work practice with that of other markets and, indeed, other massage parlours. Tiffany talks about the importance of 'work kit':

It is definitely important to have a good work kit. How could you not? Not having your own condoms and lube is just stupid, no, no. I used to see girls turn up to work without any condoms. It's not exactly hard to get yourself sorted out with what you need for work, you can buy condoms at any garage or dairy. I mean would a plumber turn up to work without his tools?

(Tiffany, parlour worker)
Peer supervision is a means of attempting to maintain a standard code of practice among workers on a particular shift or within a massage parlour as a whole. This is particularly the case in terms of informal prices (extras). Rachel comments on attempts to standardise fees:

\[
generally \text{ I think that girls try to standardise it (sex work) amongst the girls themselves or kind of and if that's kind of broken then they will get a bit shitty with that particular girl 'cos you always get to find out some way or another.}
\]

(Rachel, parlour worker)

Similarly, Sam talks about the importance of adhering to informal codes of practice:

\[
\text{[t]here are some ladies out there that if someone says 'I've only got $60 they'll take that. But the other girls will totally get up their bottom for that big time because when that client comes in again he'll try it out on the other girls as well and try to play girls off against each other. Well, a lot of them try to do that anyway, anything they can get for free, they'll try.}
\]

(Sam, parlour worker)

Since workers often share clients, they have a vested interest in maintaining a particular standard of work practice. Thus, sex workers tend to operate within boundaries or informal codes of practice that are generally universal within the sex work industry, in addition there may also be specific codes within massage parlours.

**Commonalities and Bonding**

\[
Remember \text{ our strength is in our service and this is the only way we will hold our place in the market. Remember too, our team spirit, where we shall help each other}
\]

(extract from the Studio 14B Bible)

The women who enter into sex work tend to do so after having tried a number of job options to solve their economic problems. Their financial situation can be so desperate that
prostitution often appears the best of a poor bunch of economic alternatives (McLeod 1982, Scambler 1997, Perkins 1991, Robinson 1987, Knight 1987, O'Neill 1997, Alexander 1987, Pheterson 1993). McLeod suggests that, 'recruitment to the ranks of prostitute ... is secured by women's relative poverty still being such that for large numbers sex is their most saleable commodity' (1982: 1). In New Zealand, employment opportunities for unskilled women are limited, and those that do exist are usually extremely low paid. Unskilled women, particularly single parents, tend to get locked into part-time or casual jobs with very little or no flexibility and poor opportunities for advancement (du Plessis 1994). Though figures for the participation of women in the paid labour market have increased, a large amount of these women still do not have financial security. This is due mainly to lower rates of pay, shorter hours of paid work, marginalisation, occupational segregation (vertical and horizontal), and the demands of unpaid work. Women tend to be more likely than men to be reliant on state assistance (Bunkle 1996, Briar and Cheyne 1998). In chapter one, Claudia claims that she never made a conscious effort or had even thought about getting into sex work prior to her initial involvement; rather, it was circumstances which forced her into searching out an alternative to losing her car and paying her debts. The reality is, then, that the vast majority of prostitutes have entered the business for money and remain in it for the money, in order to support their children, pay a student loan or fees, to put themselves through some form of educational training, to buy a car, or pay bills etc.

I got involved much like a lot of people I suppose, money. I had all these commitments and no way to meet them. I got in through my sister who was working in a place in Auckland. I'd never have been able to get myself out of the shit otherwise.

(Laurie, parlour worker)

In general, women who embark upon sex work in New Zealand tend to begin with parlour work. The reasons they cite for this choice include issues such as the relative security, comfort and a particular degree of anonymity and companionship which massage parlours can offer. In Christchurch, as with the other main centres in New Zealand, massage parlours are a visible and easily accessible form of the commercial sex industry, presenting a safe option for first time sex workers. The ability for massage parlours to operate between and within prostitution legislation - through informal arrangements and negotiations - ensures a certain amount of security for workers. Thus, their 'quasi-legal' status allows for a certain amount of legitimacy and structure to sex work undertaken in
massage parlours. The massage parlour work environment presents some resemblance to legitimate and traditional work structures in that massage parlour operators must be licensed and registered, the businesses are centrally located and clearly visible, the hours of work are rostered into shifts (usually eight hours), and sex workers are required to perform a specified service (the massage). In return for the organisational structure/security of the massage parlour, the sex worker has to relinquish a certain amount of control over her own work rate, turn up for her designated shifts on time and remain there for the duration of the shift. Her time in the room is negotiated between the client and the massage parlour, and sometimes the value of that time is prearranged as in the case of the ‘all-inclusive’.

Most women who work as prostitutes assert and recognise that their profession is not ‘normal’ in the conventional sense (O’Connell Davidson 1998, Jordan 1991, Delacoste 1987, Perkins et al. 1994). However, the structure given to massage parlour work through the organisation of ‘work time’ into rosters or shifts can provide massage parlour workers with a means to ‘normalise’ the work they do. Schedules, shifts or timetables enable workers to establish a separation between work and personal time. Thus, sex work becomes work that is carried out in a fixed location (the massage parlour) within a fixed time frame (the shift). This allows workers to establish work rituals such as changing into their ‘work clothes’ or ‘uniform’ prior to the commencement of the shift and then changing again at the end of the shift to achieve a separation from work. Furthermore, working regular shifts each week gives some predictability and consistency or routine to their work. Thus, they can establish some form of structure and meaning to their work.

*It feels like a circus here at the moment, it’s not run very professionally at the moment and not taken seriously. So how can I take the job seriously and try to be professional. And that has an effect upon me, I need some stability at work.*

(Holly, parlour worker)

Holly echoes the expectations of a number of workers that I spoke and worked with, in that they looked towards management to take the responsibility to implement some formal structure or framework to work within. Some women comment that since they can often experience chaos at home, they would prefer to have some order in their work to counter balance.
At least when I come in here I know I have this, this and this to do. Sure you can get the odd girl who wants to get in your face but generally for me it's nice not to have to get up and do everything like I did when I was escorting. Bev takes care of it all, the client comes in, we talk, go through and do our job, tidy up a bit afterwards and wait for the next one. You don't have to answer the phone or run around after anyone, no-one screaming at you wanting you to do stuff. I do actually find coming to work relaxing. I know it might sound awful, (laughs) but at least in this place it's professional. I'm at work.

(Chrissie, parlour worker)

However, identifying as a 'career or professional sex worker' can often be problematic for many women, who prefer instead to view sex work as a temporary measure, a means to earn extra or 'fast cash' without the serious commitment to work. Unlike private escort workers, women in massage parlours are generally not required to invest a great deal of money and time in their work since massage parlours provide the work environment and the majority of work materials (linen, tissues, towels), as well as handling the advertising and so forth. Furthermore, there is the possibility for sex workers to avoid registration in the massage parlour register. This, however, can depend on the relationship between the sex worker and the management of the parlour, and the diligence of management for completing entries in the register. Indeed, it is no secret that a number of sex workers have been able to use false IDs in order to avoid registration, (or to enable them to work in a parlour in spite of convictions for drugs or being under eighteen).

Bonding with other women or establishing some form of commonalty at work can help to release the feelings of alienation which are often associated with sex work. The ability to debrief or talk about problematic clients enables workers to leave the problems of work at work and is particularly important for workers whose family, partners or friends have no knowledge of what they do for a living.

You need to talk about work even if it’s just to tell somebody about a weird client or something the client has said or if they’ve been a pig or something and it’s not just like you can go home and talk about your day with your friends or your partner and I don’t want to go home and have all this in my head. I just want to get it out and then forget about it
Workers will often develop a sense of commonality at work with other workers on their shift and establish a form of communal identity (see Van Maanen, 1992; Parker, Gardner & Wiltshire, 1992). Indeed, the unusual hours of the night shifts in a massage parlour can mean that workers are often at odds with the hours of friends or family outside the parlour. Barley (1988) suggests that perceptions of commonality between people are enhanced when the temporal organisation of a group’s life inscribes boundaries that set members of the group apart from others. Thus, often sex workers will socialise with each other outside work. This can also happen internally within the massage parlour with ‘night girls’ and ‘day girls’ identifying as individual groups of workers. Thus, ‘time-outs’ or down time can be used to establish a distinctiveness of a group and further trust within that group (Van Maanen 1992). This, in turn, can cause friction among workers who may spend a large amount of time in each other’s company. Sex work can be dull and tedious with a great deal of time spent waiting around for clients to arrive or phone. Thus, workers must manage their time out of the room to combat the boredom encountered by workers in general occupations where boredom and surmounting it becomes a paramount concern (O’Connell Davidson, 1995; Roy, 1990; Scambler, 1997). At the same time, parlour workers must be ready to jump into action at the sound of the door buzzer signalling the arrival of a possible client. Thus, workers are not able to switch off entirely and must be only moments away from presenting themselves to a client. On my shifts, workers pass the time constantly applying/reapplying make-up/ changing clothes, napping, sending text messages to friends or family, organising their weekends, bills and so forth, watching television, playing pool, gossiping and so forth.

**Conclusion**

The use of ‘time’ as the central focus for discussion in this chapter has enabled me to unravel the complex relations that underpin how massage parlours are organised or structured and sex work is negotiated. I have argued that the social organisation of massage parlours and sex work practice hinge upon the issue of time, how it is understood, used, controlled, negotiated, fought over and of course bought and sold. Glucksmann (2000) argues that using time as a framework to analyse labour activity provides a means of ‘conceptualising and acknowledging’ the many kinds of work regardless of whether
they are paid or unpaid, formal or informal, since many labour activities involve exchanges of time or particular allocations of time use that have no financial dimension (113). The 'down-time' in the massage parlour (the time in-between clients) is an example of non-paid time/work that is crucial to the organisation of the massage parlour and sex work practice, and yet it is often overlooked or dismissed in sex work research and literature. Thus, sex work is understood in terms of 'room-time', or the services that take place during the sex worker/client encounter. As Adam notes, time that cannot be accorded a monetary value is often considered 'suspect' and held in low esteem (1993, 1995).

The many forms of time operating in a massage parlour are continually negotiated by workers, management and clients as they deal with the mechanical/linear temporality (clock time) of formal opening hours of the business, the time segments that are sold, the shifts and rosters for staff, to the more cyclic form of time such as the individual life cycle and working rhythms of sex workers. The differences between management and workers' notions of 'time' illustrate, for example, different approaches to the organisation of sex work. At one extreme is a 'bureaucratic' system incorporating timetables, fines, rosters, time segments and so forth and, on the other hand, an individualistic approach to sex work in which work and time is calculated in 'jobs'. The peculiarity of the 'bureaucratic' massage parlour is that these workers have no legally binding contract or obligation to the business. It is in this peculiar combination of 'bureaucratic' discipline and 'illegal' work that control over the organisation of time(s) come to be foregrounded as problematic.
I like to spoil my clients, like have oysters and champagne. I have satin sheets and fluffy towels, and cigars and bathrobes, and you know, they come back here and they’re always treated well, really well. I can give them the time and the attention that they want. Like if you’re working for somebody else then you’re restricted to their budget and what they want you to do, and their time frame. This is my business, I’ve spent time and money and effort building it into a successful business. I’ve got a receptionist who does all my cleaning, all the laundry, answers the phone and takes the bookings. She walks the dog, cooks me dinner, does the shopping, organises the advertising, and so I don’t have to do anything. I can just concentrate on work and consequently I’m able to do more and better work. So I organise it like a business, no, it is a business, and I look at it that way, I have to otherwise it just gets out of hand in terms of the likes of IRD catching up with you, and for me personally it has to be a business. It’s my work. I find it easy to make it a business. There’s no emotional stuff involved in my work and no emotional stuff crossing over from my personal life either. I find it easy to look at it like this, but I find it difficult sometimes to get clients to see it that way because they’re paying not just for the time, but are also looking for that intimate closeness, and I will give that to them willingly because they’re paying, but if they weren’t paying, then, then there’s no way. It’s only for the job.

(Naomi)

Naomi’s account of how she assembles her business presents a picture of a successful, independent and resourceful self-employed worker. Her representation of a sex worker is
a far cry from the tawdry images of prostitution often presented in the media, or the ‘exploited hooker’ or ‘victim’ discourses often found in prostitution studies (see Faugier & Sargeant, 1997; Høigard & Finstad, 1992). The organisation of sex work that Naomi describes is not unique in New Zealand. Naomi, is one of many ‘private’ escorts operating independently and anonymously from private residences in Christchurch\(^1\). She pays tax on her earnings (this has not been the case for all escorts), and organised her escort work as a service worker, in which she performs (intimate) services for payment without emotional attachment. The absence of direct supervision, coupled with her ability to exercise control over her work time/hours, services, money and environment, are key to Naomi’s decision to become a self-employed prostitute. Like many of her contemporaries, Naomi looks at private escorting as a business venture and herself as a professional.

Another escort, Sally comments on the independence she experiences from being a self-employed sex worker:

\[
\text{[t]his is my sole income, it’s my job and that’s how I look at it. I never liked the idea of working in this industry and not receiving a decent income or having to hand over a large portion of what I earned to someone else, some stranger. I’m entirely independent and that’s the joy of this for me and I might do things that you think are hell, but hell to me would be being dependent on the State or on a man or not making enough to live decently} \\
\text{(Sally)}
\]

Teressa also discusses her work in terms of a business, which she considers to be successful:

\[
\text{This is my business, so I can take off when I want to. I don’t have to answer to anyone. Look, if I’m going away then I just have to put an ad in the paper to say I’m lying on the beach in Cairns and I’ll see you in a couple of weeks! But at the same time, what I’ve learned is that if you are going to make a successful business in this line of work then}
\]

\(^1\) Detective A stated that in 1999 there were approximately 450 registered escorts in Christchurch. However, it is difficult to ascertain the exact number of escorts operating in Christchurch since some of the women operate seasonally, casually, or can be mobile and operate in other centres or move between sex markets, or indeed out of the industry. The NZPC claim that workers’ details are not removed from the police register when they leave the industry and cease to operate.
you've got to be interested in your clients and not just treat them like money making machines. You see, the name of the game is to get them to keep coming back and to get their friends to as well. So you can't just mess about and do it when you feel like it, you do have to be reasonably reliable for them. I think that I've built up a successful business by using good business sense, no different to any other business really, with my focus on looking after the client, that's how it generally goes, and you then get to reap the benefit.

(Teressa)

Autonomy is a prominent theme in the above accounts and in the accounts of private escorts in general. In the literature on self-employment, this form of autonomy as a form of control is inscribed in self-employment (O’Connell Davidson, 1998; Rainbird, 1991; Salmi, 1997). The discourse is one of independence, flexibility, choice, and the freedom to be ‘your own boss’, as well as enabling an individual to directly reap the rewards of their labour (see Campbell, 1992; Dale, 1991; Hakim, 1998). Such ideas are key in the construction of the sex worker identity and her world of work (see O’Connell Davidson, 1995; 1994), and even drawn upon by street workers (see Day, 1990). Salmi suggests that what is important about autonomy is not so much the independence in the work itself but the autonomy in putting together the different pieces of everyday life and coping with the different daily time patterns (Salmi, 1997). Brewis and Linstead suggest that, the control of time has been fundamental in shaping the social and psychological character of prostitution (2000a).

Autonomy is typically interpreted and practiced differently by sex workers in different sex markets. For example, the intervention of a third party, such as the management of a massage parlour or escort agency removes a great deal of the flexibility and independence of self-employment for workers. Furthermore, in spite of the fact that massage parlour workers generally do not receive a wage, nor are bound by any written or verbal contract to supply labour for a negotiated sum to the management of the parlour, they are nevertheless, required to follow management policy with regards to fee setting, work practice/services and work hours. Moreover, as the previous chapter indicates, the organisation of sex work practice in a massage parlour evolved from the protracted processes of conflict and compromise between sex workers and massage parlour management over such policies. Thus, for massage parlour workers, autonomy at work has been principally located in their individual work rhythms and strategies or mechanisms of control within the context of the
client encounter (room time). In contrast, key to the notion of self-employment for private escorts is the absence of a third party in the organisation of their work. Private escorts like Naomi, Sally and Teressa claim to work independently, using the market/client demand and their own personal preferences to design or guide their business services, fees, hours and location. Naomi, for example, stresses her freedom to define the type of specialised or personalised service that she provides her clients, to set her own fees, and operate from her home where she is free to create an intimate and up-market escort experience, indulging clients with “fluffy towels”, satín sheets, champagne and oysters.

Self-employed workers are particularly portrayed in the same discourse of autonomy drawn upon by Naomi, Sally and Teressa. In this version of the self-employed, workers construct their own work schedules and in doing so shake off workplace controls and regulations (Hakim, 1998; Salmi, 1997; Stanworth, 1998). However, Allen and Wolkowitz (1987) describe this understanding of self-employment in terms of a ‘myth of autonomy’, and contend that all labour processes for profit entail some system of control or management. This control they suggest, lies with suppliers of work (the customer or contractor), who will utilise various indirect mechanisms to regulate performance and output. Thus, there is ‘an appearance of autonomy which is more apparent than real’ (Allen & Wolkowitz, 1987). Similarly, Felstead and Jewson (2000) further suggest that the ‘free spirit’ portrayals of self-employment do not reveal the daily conflicts to exert or maintain control over work. Beneath the veneer of autonomy, self-employed workers must, they argue, engage in a ‘distinctive type of struggle and resistance’ with labour market and social constraints and limitations. They suggest that self-employed workers need to routinely engage in a self-driven process of defining the crucial aspects of their working lives and identities (Felstead & Jewson, 2000). For example, self-employed workers must make decisions concerning, when and where to work, how to monitor and police their own work schedules and practice, as well as establish and maintain an ‘interface’ with external bodies or organisations to facilitate the operation of their businesses (Felstead & Jewson, 2000). Put another way, external discipline is replaced by self-discipline.

Like other self-employed service workers, private escorts are faced with a daily struggle to negotiate diverse labour market constraints in addition to routinely addressing the legal, social and emotional constraints and pressures associated with selling sexual services. Thus, like Felstead and Jewson’s (2000) home-based workers, private escorts find themselves routinely engaged in self-management both as a means to organise their work and render meaning to their participation in sex work. Unlike massage parlour workers or
escorts operating from escort agencies, they are required to exercise a greater degree of self-management in their everyday lives and work routines (see Felstead & Jewson, 2000). As self-employed workers, private escorts are responsible for the organisation of their own work practice and organisation. They have to make choices about the work environment and hours, their services, advertisements, and police registration. As self-employed workers it is important for them to invent and sustain a work ethic, requiring them to motivate, drive and police themselves (Felstead & Jewson, 2000). Their discourses of autonomy provide them with a means of rationalisation (see Chapkis, 1996, Phoenix, 1999; Zukin, 1995). As, the above quotations from Naomi, Sally and Teressa illustrate, private escorts differentiate themselves from other 'less free' or 'less professional' sex markets in order to position themselves as independent or self-employed 'professional' operators.

In New Zealand private escorts operate as professionals through a precarious and limited autonomy that is only possible because of the ambiguity of prostitution legislation. This ambiguity facilitates informal local arrangements with the police and the daily newspapers and provides for them to operate 'discreetly'. This mode of 'professional operation' is ironically based upon the illegality of their work (see Day, 1990). Their illegality secures their anonymity. In this version of 'professionalism' the invisible nature of their work, carried out in private and discreet spaces is paramount. Their invisibility provides them with the ability to distance themselves from prostitution.

The 'professional identities' constructed by the escorts are both similar to and different from the claims made by the NZPC. In the discourse of this organisation, the work of private escorts is presented through discourse of sex workers as 'business people' legitimately servicing a social need. This discourse, drawn upon in the same way by private escorts, promotes pride in skills, knowledge, professionalism and altruism of the individuals in the industry. It crafts a sex worker identity founded on health, education (safe sex), and empowerment (the entrepreneur ship of private escorts) of sex workers. For the NZPC this discourse is coupled with political advocacy for the decriminalisation of prostitution. By contrast for the private escorts this discourse is paradoxically coupled with the illegality of their work. In their version it is the illegality that secures their anonymity. Their 'professionalism' is bound up with the invisible nature of their work, work carried out in unrecognised 'private' and discreet spaces. Their claim to being professional workers rests upon their ability to avoid disclosure and therefore association with prostitution. The political claims for decriminalisation put forward by the NZPC threaten to destabilise this anonymity by privileging legality and visibility.
By following how private escorts organise their work, this chapter will add to the thesis argument that sex work is a widely varied and textured occupation, the argument that it is also constantly being assembled and reassembled. The issue of control, a central theme in many accounts of escort work, will be drawn upon to illustrate the diversity and complexity of the escort market and sex work practice. This will entail exploring how private escorts negotiate formal legislative regulations and policing procedures, in addition to informal alliances, arrangements and networks in order to claim control over their work. Thus, the control and organisation of the escort market will be shown to be a mix of strategies to establish businesses or small firms. The peculiarity of these small firms is that, unlike massage parlours they seek to secure their operational autonomy through invisibility. Thus, if sex in massage parlours 'hides in the light' (Hebdidge, 1988), sex with private escorts is removed from the light.

For the purpose of this discussion I will focus specifically on independent private escorts. This category of escort incorporates women working alone from their own homes or rented apartments, houses or rooms, in addition to women working independently as part of a cooperative. In this situation the running costs of the work premises are shared with each woman setting and keeping the fees for her services and essentially working as an independent operator. Furthermore, the following discussion will draw upon Christchurch’s private escort market as the main source of information. This does not imply homogeneity of the sex work industry, but rather serves to illustrate the capricious dynamic nature of the industry and the discourses constituting it.

The Private Escort Market

[...]there's a big difference between working for myself and working in a parlour, it's a huge difference. I'd say that I find that I'm more motivated now, well I've always been motivated but, you know you're a lot free-er, you've got a lot more freedom to do what you want to do when you want to and you're actually doing a real job of it.
(Naomi)

Private escort work in New Zealand is not a ‘new’ market as such, there have always been women working from homes, motels and hotel rooms (Eldred-Grigg 1984). However, the
number of private escorts has increased considerably over the last 8 years to 450 registered escorts in Christchurch alone\(^2\). The steady growth of the private escort market in Christchurch has been attributed to a number of factors such as the imposition of fees, fines and bonds and the intervention in work practice by massage parlour and escort agency management, a police clamp down on escort agencies\(^3\), the exclusion of certain sex workers from working in massage parlours\(^4\), and ability for workers to operate relatively discreetly. Moreover, the ‘invisibility’ of the market enabled private escorts to escape the scrutiny of the media, and therefore represented in terms of a threat to existing legal and social frameworks. Indeed, the lack of third party involvement, such as managers or pimps makes it difficult to apply the stereotypical image of the coerced, exploited or victimised prostitute to the private escort, and therefore problematises this form of sex work. Indeed, the recent campaign for the decriminalisation of prostitution has seen the NZPC promote the private escort market, particularly the organisation of escort work into co-operatives (cottage industries), as the least exploitative and preferred form of sex work.

The formal regulation of an invisible market proved problematic for police resources and rendered existing legislation redundant. The inability of prostitution specific legislation to reflect the changing or subversive nature of sex work markets in New Zealand, in addition to the increased liberalisation of prostitution discourses, and the politicisation of ‘the prostitute voice’, helped to encourage alternative regulative (informal) arrangements for policing the sex work industry. However, containment and regulation of sex markets is typically variable through New Zealand, with different interpretations in the implementation of legislation and organisation of informal arrangements between the regions (Eden, 1997). Levels of police tolerance for particular sex markets differ between regions. These differences stem from the visibility of the particular market, public and community concerns or opposition to the market and policing policy (see Brewis & Linstead, 2000a; Brock, 1998; Day, 1996; Phoenix, 1999; Sharpe, 1998). For example, in Christchurch and Wellington, policing of the private escort market is largely characterised by an approach of containment and toleration rather than active prosecution. This approach has involved community and business groups. In Auckland, less organised supervision of the escort market exists, with sporadic police intervention in the operation of escort services.

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\(^2\) Informal police statistics

\(^3\) In Christchurch, for example, in response to complaints from massage parlours, the police urged escort agencies to either apply for a massage parlour license or scale down the numbers of women operating form one premises. (See chapter two)
However, in general, private escorts have been perceived and treated as being less problematic than more visible forms of sex work. In Christchurch, the establishment of an informal registration scheme for private escorts, ensures the continuity of the invisibility of the market and grants private escorts an informal sanction to operate. This scheme proves to be a stable working solution to the dilemma of regulating an invisible and potentially mutable market, and providing the police with a comprehensive register of escorts (along similar lines to the register maintained in massage parlours), a sense of security for the Press and a quasi-legal status for escorts. For the police, the registration scheme was considered to be a working solution to the dilemma of regulating an essentially 'invisible' market. For private escorts, this can be seen as a way to be able to operate discreetly from the suburbs. The success of the registration scheme however, hinges upon escorts' need to advertise their services in the Press, and the complicity of the Press in the scheme. In this way, the Press play a fundamental role in the regulation of the escort market. Furthermore, the registration scheme in a sense, grants escorts a 'quasi-legal' status to operate as 'registered' workers, and in turn allows them to lay claim to being self-employed workers or business women.

There has been very little research undertaken on the private escort market in New Zealand. Studies have often overlooked this 'hidden' market in favour of health and legislative reforms addressing the more visible sex markets (Jordan, 1992; Knight, 1987; Plumridge & Chetwynd, 1996; Robinson, 1987; Woods, 1996). However, Eden's study (1997), of escort agencies and massage parlours stands alone in terms of research into the organisational structures of the sex work industry in New Zealand. The study considered the interrelationships between different networks of actors involved in the organisation and production of sexual services (1997). Eden argues that the dyadic relationship between clients and workers cannot be understood without reference to the complex relations between actors that make up the sex industry. Thus, Eden pays attention to the different styles of organising prostitution and the individual actions of owners and managers. However, though he provides a useful insight into the strategies adopted by massage parlours and escort agencies in their attempt to sell sex, he largely ignores the organisation of private escort work and the process of identity construction that workers engage in.

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4 Sex workers are unable to operate in a massage parlour if they have a drug or prostitution conviction with in the last 10 years (Massage Parlours Act 1978 s.18(b)).
5 Wellington police quickly followed the Christchurch example. In Auckland, escorts are unable to advertise in the Herald newspaper, thus, a similar system has not been introduced there yet.
Organising Businesses/Firms and Selling Sex

The image of prostitution featured in the movie “Pretty Woman”, of out-calls to five star hotels, intimate dinners, gifts and so forth, fails to present a realistic picture of the New Zealand private escort market, and may only be reality for a very small group of private escorts. To the uninitiated the escort market is assumed to be one of women escorting men in both public and private surroundings. The reality is that the private escort market operates discreetly from anonymous suburban locations. Indeed the sex industry is riddled with an ambiguous use of terms and this ambiguity of terminology is tied to ambiguous legislation used to regulate prostitution. The word 'escort', for example, does not impart the true nature of the escort market, alluding instead to out-call services. Claudia comments upon her initial misunderstanding of escort organisation and practice:

[i]t’s generally taken for granted by the clients that most of the girls do in-calls. I learned that the hard way when I didn’t have a place at first. It’s funny but when I first decided to do escorting, I had this idea that I’d just do it part-time and that most of it would be out-calls, like going out to the Parkroyal and visiting clients at hotels and that. So I didn’t think about setting myself up with an apartment. So at first I used to have to stress that this was an out-call service, but there just wasn’t the demand for out-call services

(Claudia)

In general, the majority of work for private escorts consists of in-calls, where the client visits the home or rented apartment, house or room of the escort. Though escorts are always available for out-calls, local clients prefer the discretion of visiting a suburban address rather than have the escort visiting their address. Thus, the issue of setting up work premises particularly a location that is relatively discreet to avoid unwanted attention is paramount for escort work. Furthermore, the majority of private escorts who rent properties do so without disclosing to the landlord the intended nature of their tenancy, and therefore operated under the threat of disclosure, as highlighted by Tina:

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6 The women whose business solely consists of out-calls to five star hotels entertaining corporate businessmen in New Zealand are a minority according to Detective Allen (Christchurch Police).
7 On average private escorts claimed to have a ratio of 8:1 in-calls to out-calls
[n]o one of my neighbours complained about me, in fact, I doubt that they even knew I was working from home since I only saw no more than seven clients a week

(Tina)

The running costs of working alone, in addition to safety factors, lead a large number of private escorts to share work premises and costs\(^8\). This style of work organisation having no central figure deriving an income or intervening in the earnings of the escorts, is known as a co-operative.\(^9\) Amanda comments on the organisation of a co-operative:

*Each lady keeps what she earns here, you can’t just pool all the money at the end of the shift or the end of the week, it just doesn’t work. We had one lady who wasn’t any good, I mean she would be cold and abrupt with the clients and I don’t intend on making an effort to be nice to my clients and get them coming back so I can pool my money for the likes of somebody who obviously just isn’t interested. So what we do, there are 6 ladies working here. We don’t charge any fees, we split the expenses so it’s fair. We have a kitty and everybody pays a share. We pay $90 a week each if we are here 4 plus days, the girls that work only 3 days pay $60 a week and that all does the house, the power, the phones, the advertising and groceries. We hire the washing machine and we share the house work and have a roster for that, but you never get a system that everyone sticks to!!* 

(Amanda)

The mix of sharing support or running costs and taking individual earnings from client transactions maintains the critical element of self-employment that is found in all forms of sex work. The general consensus among escorts is that they can largely dictate their own working conditions and services. Indeed, it would appear from previous accounts that escorts have the freedom to chose when, where and how to work. However, they also have the responsibility of the practical daily tasks of organising work, which in the case of a massage parlour, would normally be done by the manager or receptionist. Thus, whether

\(^8\) In spite of the options to work independently or in a co-operative, some escorts nevertheless have continued to operate from the ‘old style’ escort agencies organised along the lines of a massage parlour from a suburban house. These agencies managed to remain in operation by scaling down the number of workers and moving premises (See Policing chapter re: clamp-down on escort agencies)
escorts operate independently or in a co-operative, they have to make some degree of commitment in terms of finance, time and emotional labour to the organisation of their work. For example, routine tasks required for the establishment and running of a private escort service entails, locating and furnishing premises, establishing a phone line, advertising services, answering phone inquiries, organising the laundry and cleaning the premises and so forth. Thus to a large extent workers' 'down/free time' (when not engaged in a client transaction), becomes an important aspect of organising their work and crucial to the completion of these tasks.

Sally shares her thoughts on being a self-employed escort:

"There are a lot of drawbacks to the job as well as advantages, it's not all plain sailing so to speak. I mean I found that I had to take on a lot of things that I had taken for granted that the receptionist in the parlour did. Like answering the phone and dealing with time wasters, now that can be a real drag, more annoying than anything and the fact that you've always got to be ready to answer the phone, even if you're using your mobile, you have to be able to pick it up and jump straight into it." (Sally)

Salmi’s optimistic view of self-employment stresses independence in terms of an individual's ability to organise everyday life by managing the different daily time patterns. Indeed for private escorts, the ability to control their time is often stressed as one of the main reasons for working in this market. Thus, Salmi argues that being able to control time and therefore have the ability to undertake small and unimportant tasks/things, signifies less external limits over daily time use, which in turn is crucial for developing a series of self realisation and control of daily life (1997). The important thing stressed in Salmi’s argument is how much workers have an input in the totality of their work (1997). For private escorts, work autonomy is generally defined in terms of the absence of a third party in the organisation of their work, leaving them free to organise their own time, fees and services, and therefore claim control over their work. However, what is overlooked in Salmi’s argument are the arrangements, negotiations or compromises that workers must undertake in order to secure this autonomy. Home-based or self-employed forms of work whether contractual or independent, are nevertheless subject to external constraints and

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9 Some of these co-ops may resemble a style of escort agency with a third party organising the running costs of the premises and the staff.
limitations which the worker must negotiate, often meaning a compromise for the worker (see Felstead & Jewson, 2000; Rainbird, 1991). This does not imply that self-employed workers do not have control over the organisation of their work, but suggests that work autonomy of their business is both precarious and limited.

As part of the process of operating as a private escort service, sex workers must regularly bargain for control over their markets (see Day, 1996; O'Connell Davidson, 1994, 1995; O'Neill, 1997). For example, Police tolerance of the private escort market is predicated upon the escort's compliance to voluntarily register with the police and to operate discreetly, safely (through the use of safe sex paraphernalia), and avoid provoking community complaints. Clare comments:

> [t]hen you have to register, which is probably not one of the most pleasant things to do when there are other policemen standing around sort of girl sniffing or whatever, and I'm there in their books, I'm down as a prostitute and I don't think that you ever get rid of that. And dealing with the Press can be a bit embarrassing depending on who is on the desk as they can make things unpleasant if there are other people waiting too, you know, checking your details to see if you're registered for everyone to see. It just isn't very discreet and then they are really funny about what we can put in our ads.

(Clare)

Registration, requires escorts to submit their personal details and 'partially' give up their anonymity in exchange for an informal sanction to operate, and the ability to advertise their services in the newspaper. Thus the private escort's freedom and flexibility is constructed within the boundaries of police toleration and subsequently subject to police discretion and policy. Roxy Blain, an Australian sex worker comments that control over work practice and organisation as she experienced it, was based on compromise, particularly the escort's compliance to operate discreetly within local informal boundaries:

> [w]orking for yourself has a lot to offer in terms of work conditions and control, but there can be problems too if you aren't careful. I tried to keep a low profile in the neighbourhood to avoid problems with the council, police or other residents of the area.

(Blain, 1994)
Discretion is crucial to police toleration of the escort market and also key in the motivation for many women to become private escorts. Initiating client contact and remaining discreet was achieved by advertising escort services in the daily or provincial newspapers. Indeed, O'Connell Davidson (1995) comments that though it is possible for escorts to attract some custom through word of mouth, they do however need to advertise their business in order to attract further custom. Advertising escort services is key to the operation of the escort market in New Zealand and therefore is used as a bargaining tool to encourage private escorts to register with the police. In Christchurch for example, the daily newspaper, the Press, runs an escort column specifically for the advertisement of escort services\(^{10}\). However, the language and content of advertisements in this column, is subject to newspaper management guidelines on 'offensive material'. Such guidelines are also influenced or guided by complaints made by readers, business/corporate advertisers, or law enforcement agents. Guidelines for sex industry advertisements can also vary between regional publications. Furthermore, these variations can occur in terms of individual interpretations of the guidelines within publications. In Christchurch for example, escorts often claim inconsistency between employees on the classified desk. Claudia comments on her experience of placing advertisements:

\[
\text{[y]ou can't describe yourself at all, it's just not allowed for some reason. I'll generally have something like 'upmarket executive service' and you always have to have service after it and you can't put in that you are tall and blonde or busty and brunette, nothing like that. If you ever glance at the paper you'll probably wonder why they all sound so staid, but every now and again someone will get away with voluptuous or something. They allow you words like friendly or fun, but it's interesting to see that you see ladies say that they are mature but, you wouldn't be allowed to say young and yet you're free to put voluptuous figure or fuller figure and you can't put that you're slim. It's just so hypocritical and it also depends on which lady serves you at the desk too.}
\]

(Cludia)

\(^{10}\) Private escorts may also advertise in contact magazines, local papers and the Internet, however, most business is derived from the Press.
Though escorts claim that Press guidelines for advertising are ambiguous and inconsistent, the classified editor/manager comments that guidelines for ‘adult entertainment’ in the Press are quite clear:

\[b\]asically, the Press will not publish any advertisements which will overtly offer sexual favours or sexual partners for sexual favours. The question of whether or not the service is offered is not relevant as far as the Press is concerned. The Press reserves the right to basically reject any advertising that is offensive or defamatory or in bad taste.

(Classified Editor/Manager of the Press)

Furthermore, concessions are made for the advertisements of particular groups of escorts in order to avoid the misrepresentation of services,

\[w\]hat we have done is to make an exception for larger and older people so you will see in the paper, mature escort, or cuddly or large lady, but we don’t allow young and we don’t allow slim or long-legged, because that’s not, you can’t have a long-legged service and we made these exceptions because we were getting calls from escorts saying that they were getting clients ring up and come round and expect to see a dolly bird out of ‘Playboy’ or something like that, when in reality she is 45 and a larger size. So to get around that problem we allowed them to use large or mature, and we also had the same problem with bisexual, lesbians and homosexuals and transsexuals. That’s why you will see some ads like ‘Lara transsexual fun’. A lot of the vetting is done at the front counter and I or one of the two supervisors will generally see them before they finally go into the paper...and I admit that we don’t always get it 100% right it just physically cannot be done in terms of consistency.

(Classified Editor/Manager of the Press)

Thus, to advertise in the Press, escorts negotiate around restrictions to describe their service.

For some escorts, the ambiguity of advertisement guidelines can work in their favour, such as mature or larger women who do not present the stereotypical ‘ideal body’. In contrast,
the Dominion, Wellington's metropolitan newspaper, appears to be more liberal in terms of advertising content and allows more explicit advertisements such as, body shape/size. The following are examples taken from the Dominion and the Press within the same week in 2002:

Carla 38DD, slim & playful, likes B&D and fantasy, discretion assured.  
(The Dominion)

Luanna, Fetish, B&D, fantasy and bi-doubles, what you like  
(The Dominion)

Asian discreet professional svc with busty, sexy slim lady, absolutely Wgtn's no.1 with toys and fantasy  
(The Dominion)

Naomi, finally a service that is upmarket but inexpensive. Clean but not clinical. Professional but not stuffy. This is what you've been waiting for.  
(The Press)

Holly, wild versatile svc.  
(The Press)

Ellie, a frisky fun-filled fantasy service  
(The Press)

Jade, a raunchy redhead with a hot and fired-up service  
(The Press)

Similar to the restrictions on the newspaper advertisements, the phone descriptions given by escorts at the onset of client contact, are also initially quite generalised, alluding to body shape, and the type of service offered. This is done as a precautionary measure. Like the massage parlour market, telephone descriptions make use of adjectives such as curvy, voluptuous or medium build as a means to disguise rounded or slightly overweight body types. Experienced clients often request more specific details such as, whether an escort had tattoos or was 'shaven', or make inquiries about general and specialised services such
as, anal, golden showers, B&D, and fantasy. The ambiguity of escort advertisements to a certain extent, serves both to entice clientele and avoid public or police scrutiny. Euphemisms such as, French, Greek and versatile\(^{12}\) are used to describe the variety of services on offer, and allow escorts to subvert legal and social constraints, and more importantly, newspaper censorship. Karen comments on her selling techniques:

\[
\text{[y]ou want to sell yourself, but I always try to be pretty honest on the phone. You have to point out all your good bits and leave out the bad ones, like I'm blonde, tall and have long legs but don't mention my wobbly bits!}
\]

(Karen, escort)

Reference to 'basic' and 'full' service in both advertisements and in telephone negotiations work on the assumption that the client already has an existing knowledge of the sex industry. In the U.K., O'Connell Davidson comments that, the laws on soliciting have made marketing sexual services difficult (1994). Therefore, sex workers are unable to overtly state the true nature of the service or the price. Thus, advertising for the escort market does not and cannot centre on extending 'product' awareness, but rather relies on attracting clients with existing knowledge of the service (O'Connell Davidson, 1995)\(^{13}\). In New Zealand, the private escort market relies on clients with some product knowledge, because of the ambiguity of advertisements and telephone negotiations. However, the adversities of client negotiations become less problematic in terms of contravening formal legislation with increased police tolerance. Unlike the situation in the U.K., the private escort in New Zealand operates as a quasi-legal market subject to community constraints and police supervision/tolerance.

The way in which an escort deals with an inquiry on the telephone can be a crucial factor in whether or not the caller will follow through with a booking. Moreover, dealing with telephone inquiries can also be complicated by the possibility of community vigilantes.

\(^{11}\) Denotes service. Escorts were required to include 'service' in their advertisements with the Press.

\(^{12}\) Will perform anal.

\(^{13}\) In New Zealand, the establishment of the massage parlour market to a certain extent helped to free up and indeed promote advertising for sex workers in the escort market. The easily accessible massage parlours have often been the first experience of the sex work industry for many clients, in which they were introduced to sex work terminology and services. Negotiations within massage parlours were carefully orchestrated, in order to avoid legislation pertaining to prostitution related activities. Thus, receptionists were well versed to deal with client inquiries using ‘non-risky’ terminology. Likewise, prior to the introduction of the registration scheme, escorts worked without the informal police sanction, and were therefore prudent in terms of client negotiations and service advertisements.
Thus, in spite of police toleration of the escort market, the escort must exhibit caution when discussing services, and particularly avoid explicit reference to sexual services. Sally, for example, opts to use a set format/script that she gives clients when they call, either in one piece or in segments depending on whether she senses genuine interest:

"Hi you're speaking with Sally I tend to offer you a service that I hope you'll receive as sensual, so if there's something that spins your wheels do let me know. I'm in my mid 30s, slim size 10 dress size, 12Bcup, private residence at the beginning of Tynedale Drive should you care to call on me sometime. Base rate is 60 for the half hour, 100 for the hour, what more can I tell you?"

(Sally)

A large portion of the escort's unpaid time or 'down time' is used to market and organise her services, such as, answering the telephone and waiting for appointments. Answering the telephone in particular, not only consumes a large slice of the escort's time, but also requires a great deal of emotional labour to be undertaken. Escorts claim to receive a great deal of 'crank' calls in the course of their day in comparison to actual appointments or bookings, from clients who systematically go through the escort column. Nevertheless, escorts have to treat each call or inquiry as a possible booking which means that they have to provide each caller with information concerning their service. Claudia comments:

"One of the things that I do miss about the parlour is having someone to answer the phone for you and do all the arrangements. I find it quite difficult selling myself. I'd rather someone did it for me, so I didn't have to answer the damn thing and go through the whole spiel and know that they're just phoning because they're bored or just want to annoy a prostitute."

(Claudia)

Workers claim that a large number of these crank calls or 'time wasters', are people who get a thrill from talking to a 'live prostitute' for the purpose of masturbating on the telephone. Helen comments:

"Those calls really annoy me, if they want a wank on the phone then they should call the 0900 numbers instead of wasting my time."

(Helen)
Telephone inquiries are the first point of contact between the private escort and client and therefore are important in establishing a rapport. However the call can also be the most time consuming and mundane aspect of the work for the escort. This has seen escorts embrace technology such as mobile phones, voicemail, call divert and the Internet as a means to facilitate work flexibility in the organisation of their time. For example, private escorts who work alone make use of voicemail in an attempt to catch business if they are busy with a booking/client and unable to take calls personally. Helen and Jenny widen their market by using the Internet as an approach to client contact, using chat rooms to promote their services and recruit clientele. Jenny comments:

> I set up an ICQ, months back, advertising gender and bi doubles and advertised the ICQ number in the paper and that went really well. You can search for people in Christchurch. It’s just a chat programme and you can do your negotiating online, and then meet the client. You can do this when you’re not busy and chat away in between bookings. We do a lot of ICQ clients. It’s been pretty good. Just proves that there are lots of different ways to meet clients, you’ve just got to be open to it. (Jenny)

**Working Spaces: operating from the "burbs"**

For private escorts work autonomy and notions of professionalism are tied to the freedom to create a working environment that best suits their work practice and also secures a relatively safe, comfortable and discreet space to work. Naomi, for example, organises the spatial location of her work in such a way that it appears professional without being too formal. She divides her house into two areas, one half of the house she uses only for the purpose of work and the other part is her living area. The work area is decorated in pastels and fashionably furnished to create a comfortable and yet formal atmosphere. The receptionist’s desk and computer occupy one corner of the lounge/reception area, which can be hidden by a dividing door when clients arrive. Through the use of distinctive interior colour and furnishings, Naomi makes a clear separation in terms of working space and living space even down to personal and work linen and clothing\textsuperscript{14}.

\textsuperscript{14} These were colour co-ordinated for work and home.
Jenny and Helen also work from their own homes and commented that being in control of their work environment allows them to feel relatively comfortable and safe. Working on their ‘home turf’, means that they can feel at ease when negotiating with their clients. Designing their own working environment also allows Jenny and Helen to create or script a particular ‘set’ for their client encounter. Helen claimed that not only is it important to make her client feel at ease through the use of music, lighting, aromas and specific bed linen that are considered to be erotic (satin sheets), but also so that she can get into a comfortable and relaxed frame of mind herself. Being in control of her work environment, having the ability to change anything she wishes enables Helen to feel comfortable to negotiate and perform services:

“I get into using oil burning candle because you’re going into a room sometimes with a total stranger and it’s a good way to relax. I like to relax by having some of my things around me, things I like and make me feel relaxed and good”
(Helen)

Similarly, Jenny creates a particular environment conducive to the type of service she provides. She uses a spare room in her house for her work. In the centre of her work space she has placed a king size bed and displays all her ‘work tools’ such as, B&D equipment and sex toys around the room. She prefers her work area to be minimal, believing it to be more suitable to her style of work practice and services:

“New clients when they come in are a little surprised at it (the room), but they get used to it. I like it that way and they get to see how it works better that way not to have the conventional set up of the bed and all the bits of furniture that you have in a room, after all what we’re going to be doing is not conventional!”
(Jenny)

However, working from home does have its disadvantages as Jenny points out:

“You have to want the client to go away happy when you work from home because at the end of the day if they’re not happy then you don’t want to worry about a brick coming through your window when you’re working.” (Jenny)
Rather than work from their own homes, some escorts opt to rent apartments or houses alone or with other escorts and some made arrangements with motel owners for the use of their rooms. Teressa and Claudia, for example, operate from rented central city apartments resembling up market hotel suites. Amanda, Barbara, Laura and Rochelle state that they prefer to keep their work location separate from their personal ‘home space’ and therefore opted to share houses with two, three or four other escorts. In this way they share expenses and enjoy a sense of security from working in proximity to other women.

In addition to establishing a client base in Christchurch, a number of escorts embark upon working ‘out of town’, travelling to smaller towns in the South Island that do not have an established or centralised sex industry. This often proves to be a lucrative exercise for these private escorts. Though this is not necessarily a new approach to sex work (see Jordan, 1991), developments in telecommunications technology through the use of mobile phones, pagers and computers allows escorts to create niche markets and expand their existing markets. Trips are made on a regular basis in order to establish a regular clientele in each town. Advertisements are placed in a local newspaper stating the dates that the escort will be in town and so forth. Claudia comments on her experience of working out of town:

[I]’ve heard this term which I don’t like very much that we’re ‘chasing work.’ But looking at it we’re a lot busier and even after we’ve paid for the petrol and our motel and whatever we are still coming out a lot better. We’ve got to know, we’ve got regular clients in the centres that we go to and we can generally guarantee that we will have 3 each that we can think of and we will get more than that. It’s always better than Christchurch.
(Claudia)

Working alone means that escorts, whether on out-calls or in-calls are vulnerable and therefore, safety precautions for both services are generally taken. Though the majority of bookings are for in-calls, escorts will occasionally receive requests for out-calls. These can vary in destination, from hotels, motels and private homes with the travelling distance entirely subject to the discretion of the escort. Securing safety for out-calls, for example, includes checking the client's details, name, telephone number and the address to be visited by calling the hotel, or Telecom operator for verification, and then call the client to confirm
arrangements.\textsuperscript{15} The same process can be used for new in-call clients. Further precautions include using a ‘driver’ for out-calls, or working with other escorts. When a client enters an escort’s apartment or home, they can never be sure who is in the next room, by closing doors alludes to the idea that there are other people on the premises. This can provide the escort with a sense of security. In addition, an escort has the advantage of familiarity with the layout of her work space in the event that she may need to make a quick exit or phone call. Tessa comments:

\begin{quote}
[I] always make out that there’s someone else in the house apart from me, they don’t know do they. They just come in the door and get shown into the room and the bathroom so they don’t know who is there even when you’re on your own.
\end{quote}

(Tessa)

Helen and Jenny contact each other after each client as a safety measure:

\begin{quote}
Jenny and I keep in touch during the day when we’re working or she’s round here because I work off a landline and she’s off her mobile, so we know when each others got a client and we’ll call each other when we’ve finished.
\end{quote}

(Helen, escort)

In creating their own work space escorts claim control over the work that is performed and how it is 'packaged' for the client. This is in contrast to the massage parlour where workers share rooms that reflect the theme of the massage parlour rather than the worker. Furthermore, by creating her own work environment, the escort is able to a certain degree, manage her 'visibility'. This is critical to her ability to both operate from the suburbs and paradoxically present herself as a 'professional'.

**Organising Work: 'jobs' and markets**

Time plays a deep and often paradoxical role in shaping the social and psychological character of prostitution and the organisation of sex work practice. For sex workers in

\footnote{\textsuperscript{15} Though escorts take such precautions this does not mean that their job is risk free or the precautions are able to ensure their safety.}
general, controlling time is crucial to ideas of their autonomy. Indeed, the social organisation of sex work practice in massage parlours for example, is shaped by how time is fought over, negotiated, and controlled, by massage parlour management, sex workers and clients. In reaction to this form of work organisation, private escorts claim the freedom to construct their own timetables, work schedules and work practice by working independently, without the direct intervention of a third party. However, escorts are nevertheless subject to the same external pressures as workers from other sex markets when constructing their work, such as, social and familial responsibilities, their economic position, market competition, the supply and demand of services, individual work rhythms, the number of regular clients. Like massage parlour workers, the management of time for escorts is an important process in the definition of work and involves not only the task of managing time in the client encounter, but also the organisation of time outside the encounter. The irony here is that given the freedom to choose, many escorts opt to work set hours per week, similar to the shift system hours in a massage parlour. This allows for some routine to the work day for both escorts and their regular clientele.

As self-employed workers, it makes good economic and organisational sense to establish regular business hours and thereby introduce a degree of self-discipline and self-motivation. The absence of externally imposed work policies such as those implemented in massage parlours, means that escorts have to internally discipline themselves in order to establish and maintain particular levels of work, income and work ethic. Naomi comments:

[It]o me this is not just work, it's also my business and you can lose it so easily by not being here when you say you will, it's not really the case of working when you feel like it. The flexibility comes into how you do your work and the money and things but you have to be regular with your daily working routines. I've worked hard to build up my business just like any business really, where you have the responsibility of turning up, being here regularly, be available, keeping to your ads.

(Naomi)

Teressa, for example, regularly works 10 am to 6pm Monday to Friday. During these hours Teressa deals with phone inquiries and appointments at her rented townhouse in the

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16 The massage parlour approach of organising time into routine shifts and schedules was often in conflict with the more flexible approach preferred by workers whereby work was broken down into blocks of time (30, 45 and 60 minutes) or 'jobs' (client encounter).
central Christchurch. She uses an answer service if she is busy in a client encounter or answering a telephone inquiry. If she experiences a 'lull' in business, Teressa will extend her work hours simply by diverting calls to her home phone, making herself available for bookings until 9pm. Similarly, Amanda, like Teressa, regularly works Monday to Friday 10am -6pm from shared premises with three other escorts, working a split shift system (two working 10am -6pm and two in the evenings). Amanda is restricted to working office hours since neither her partner nor children are aware that she is operating as an escort.

The organisation of work time into specific hours and days allows private escorts to establish a separation from work and home, to be able to clock into and out of work mode. Thus, organising work into routine timetables not only makes sound economic sense in terms of competing for their work, but also gives some structure to an escort's work day. Helen, who works from her home, begins to take calls from 9am until 6pm during the weekdays and will extend her working hours if she had a slow week or day. She will shorten her work hours if she has family commitments and will then work longer the following week. Jenny arranges her bookings around her two small children and their school and creche hours. She uses a mobile phone as a point of contact and finds that in this way she is able to take calls throughout the day. Tessa, Naomi, Clare, Shirley and Laura prefer not to work at weekends and regularly work weekdays 10am till 7pm with the exception of late bookings for regular clientele only.

In contrast, workers like Claudia who work part-time and prefer a more flexible and less structured approach to working hours conduct her business on her mobile phone, and will only go to work (rented apartment) for confirmed bookings.

\[y\]ou still find yourself waiting for the phone to ring and so you tend not to get into anything or go anywhere that's going to interfere with you getting ready for work, like make sure you stay clean, don't get too sweaty or leave town for the day or something like that. Another thing is that you're always conscious that the phone might ring and so you can't really relax, you know, have a couple of drinks, just in case you've got to jump into your car.

(Claudia)
Operating from a mobile phone has allowed escorts the flexibility to be able to take inquiries and bookings during the course of the day without being restricted to one location and therefore can be seen as a means of maximising their time and earnings (Brewis & Linstead, 1998; 2000a). The disadvantage of this flexibility as Claudia points out, is that she always finds that she is constantly 'on duty' and as such means that she has to be prepared for work. Though Claudia makes herself available for work 12-7pm Monday to Friday she confesses to switching off her phone if she receives too many crank calls that day. Thus, Claudia's flexible approach means that she can often lose regular clientele or general trade to her competitors:

*I can work my own hours now without anyone breathing down my neck, or telling me what to do. I used to find it quite stressful to have to get to work at a certain time and stay there until the end. I used to really hate that, especially when it was really quiet, I could be sitting there for nothing, doing nothing. And you could get certain receptionists who used to drag the shift out for their own pay now I'll just switch off the phone if I don't want to work and then I'll work out of town for a couple of days to make up the money I've missed.*

(Claudia)

Thus, actual paid work for private escorts can take up less than half of their working day. Indeed, a great deal of what I term 'down time', or unpaid work time is fundamental in the organisation of sex work practice across all sex markets. Private escorts in particular, (except for escorts like Naomi who employ a receptionist), have no choice but to perform the mundane tasks of answering the phone, placing advertisements, waiting for bookings to arrive, and cleaning. The amount of unpaid time invested in such mundane tasks potentially determines the quality of service that a client will receive and the quantity of work that an escort can achieve. Self-employed workers have to invest their own non-paid time in order to reap the benefits of their labour (Rainbird, 1991). Women who work in private escort cooperatives are able to share some of these tasks around using a rota system. This enables workers to free-up some of their non-paid time. Amanda comments:

*[w]e have found in the past that 9 out of 10 times that the clients will choose the person that they are talking to on the phone. So to skip that

17 In addition she often found herself working weekends or doing some out-of-town work to make her job quota or earnings for the week.
issue and the aggro that it causes, then whoever answers the phone, then her name is Jo and she is the receptionist only and that stops there. However you still get the odd client who will try to offer whoever answers the phone extra if you would work, and this can be a real battle.

(Amanda)

**Paid Time: escort 'jobs’**

In general, the paid time of sex workers, that is the time spent in client encounters, is the time which sex workers are documented as managing most carefully (see Brewis & Linstead, 2000a; Ecstasy, 1993; O'Connell Davidson, 1995; O'Neill, 2001). It is imperative for an escort to control the timing of the encounter particularly since her earnings are based upon the duration of the encounter. Client transactions are divided into time specific segments each accorded a particular fee. Similar to time segments in massage parlours, the private escort divides her services into 30, 45 and 60 minute time segments. These time segments are referred to as 'jobs' by escorts and operate similar to the massage parlour all-inclusive, with the assumption that a full-service will be provided. If a client requests any additional services, such as anal or golden showers, the escort generally charges extra if she wishes.

The fees that private escorts charge can vary according to the niche market, the level of skills and specialization of the escort in addition to the economic circumstances of the escort. In general, market differentiation in terms of fees (time-based) is minimal, in spite of skill level and specialization. However, the introduction of 15 minute specials for example, significantly lowers the price of services in general. For example, the price for penetrative sex ranges from $40 for a 15 or 20 minute special to $160 for an hour. Naomi comments:

> I work half hours and hours on an all-inclusive charge and it's strictly cash. I charge $80 for a half hour all-inclusive and $120 for an hour I do think that what I'm doing is worth more but I can't go beyond what I am charging now though if I do anything extra anything that they specially request any service that is not in the standard form of things, then I will ask more, but you have to be consistent and can't just go charging different prices willy nilly. (Naomi)
The prices for services have increased little over the past 20 years. This is claimed to be largely as a result of the growth of the private escort market, and therefore increased competition in addition to a reduction in the frequency of client business for the sex industry in general. Cori comments:

*I've been working about 20 years, and back then I'd be getting $60 for straight sex back then. For everything, for a full-service was $80 when I was working in a massage parlour, so you could say the prices haven't changed. In fact they've gone backwards when you consider the cost of living back then and inflation, and now I'm earning $50 for half an hour escorting.*

(Cori)

Helen comments that during the last 12 months the number of escorts advertising in the Press has increased, thus, pushing her to reduce her fees to keep up with the competition:

*[w]hen I first started out on my own I started out at $70 for half an hour and I got it! It was like wow, and then competition got a bit more, and you can see in the paper how many girls are coming out, and I went to $60 for half an hour and I'm happy with that. I do 45 minutes and that's $80 and an hour is $100 and I do 20 minutes for $50 and they're getting exactly the same service but it's rushed and I always say to them 'it's rushed!'*  

(Helen)

In addition, increased market competition has seen the emergence of cheaper or ‘less complex’ services such as the 15 or 20 minute 'quickies'. The ‘quickies’ tend to be offered at the lower end of the escort market and are often cited as the cause for a general drop in service prices among escorts and across the sex work industry as a whole. Massage parlours in particular, have tried to compete with the escort market by offering similar discounted prices or specials. Amanda comments:

*[h]ere, we all charge the same prices...it's 20 minutes for $40 and that is a very quick in and out, we do a half hour for $50 and an hour at $90 and that's all.* (Amanda)
Though it would appear that escorts may earn less per half hour than massage parlour workers, they do however have the security that every actual booking or transaction that is processed is guaranteed money and there is no risk of 'straights':

"The good thing about escorting is that you don't get 'straights', or just 'hand jobs'. The clients you tend to get tend to want a bit more, like the other day I had this really easy fantasy to do, straight $120 for the half hour."

(Tania)

An escort is essentially in charge of the time that she will spend with a client and therefore is able to extend or shorten the encounter if necessary. Escorts will often find themselves going slightly over the allotted time segment (paid time) into their own time (unpaid time) in order to cultivate regular clientele:

"A lot of the clients that we see here just want the contact with someone, a cuddle or a chat, a coffee, just a bit of intimacy in their lives really, something that they are unable to get in at home for some reason or another. We try to provide them with somewhere nice to spend time, you know, try to create an intimate setting where they can come and relax and leave everything on the doorstep, and L and I try to get that across on the phone, let them know that we won't wham bam them."

(Clare)

Like massage parlour workers, escorts must also cultivate a regular client base for their own business and therefore attempt to secure a guaranteed income:

"Here are a few clients that I won't see and I'll just avoid the phone calls but only because they make work too difficult. All my clients are scrupulously clean and very into sex so they come sober, and prepared, yeah, occasionally they have had a drink and occasionally they will have a drink with me. But they come here prepared for sex and they want good sex and I endeavour to provide that."

(Jan)
[i]t's not just a case of a quick bonk, they could get that on the street. It all begins when you first open the door, the greeting, the smile, they're coming to you to your place for a reason, and you have to give them something that they're simply not going to get in a parlour or off the street or from X down the road.

(Shirley)

[w]ell what the clients say to me is when you go to an agency or a parlour then it's like a production line, in the door, in the shower, oral, fuck, come, back in the shower, hurry up and out you go. Like a production line and what I try to do is to provide something a bit different, less hurried and more intimate. I'm a professional and this is my business and so I let them know that this is what I do.

(Jenny)

Though escort work provides the flexibility for workers to indulge regular clients with extended time or more intimate behaviour, this flexibility can also effectively become a burden with workers pushing the boundaries of their services in order to keep up with competition between each other.

**Times and Bodies**

The passage of natural time can be an important determinant in an individual's work practice and career longevity (Adam, 1995). This is particularly pertinent in terms of sex work in which there are usually a limited number of years that a worker can enjoy being in high demand and thereby derive maximum income for their efforts (Brewis & Linstead, 2000). Though niche markets of older (mature) sex workers have increasingly appeared to cater to client demands for a 'mature service', this often means that these escorts have to renegotiate their services and fees in order to be competitive. Teressa and Barbie comment that when competing in a sex market in which youth and the stereotypical 'ideal' body are predominant in attracting clientele/business often means that they have to make compromises in terms of their expectations for organising fees and services.

Teressa, for example has worked in the sex industry for over 20 years, during this time she established a high income and category of clientele. She provides clients with specialised and often ‘intimate’ services with a high degree of skill. However, Teressa comments that
she has to adopt a more flexible approach to fees and services as she gets older, and her body needs more investment in terms of time and money to keep it in shape. Thus, to retain or expand her client base, she includes specific services such as anal and golden showers, fantasy, spanking into her normal hourly charge:

In average I make $2000 a week and on a good week it's $2500 and on a quiet week it can be $1500, and it's getting harder to keep that income. I'm having to spend more and more time and money on myself, you know like going to the gym, personal trainers and the odd bit of enhancement if you know what I mean, to look after my body, to keep it looking good and working for me. I have to put a lot of effort into it now. There's one of the reasons why I'm still so popular and another I put it down to is that I'll do just about all services for $70-100 each, such as golden showers, anal etc. everything apart from B&D and I'll refer them to A. I have to take a flexible approach to this and what I will supply. I need to be competitive at my age to stay popular and maintain my income.

(Teressa)

Barbie, on the other hand, decided to aim for a higher turnover of clients at a reduced fee in order to compete with younger escorts in the market. In contrast to Teressa who continues to operate as an up-market service, relying upon regular clientele and providing specialist services at discounted rates, Barbie opts to create a niche market by catering to and attracting older clientele (pensioners). Barbie comments:

I get a lot of the older gentlemen and it's really a matter of company for them a bit of closeness, cuddles and company. They take a little longer to get them sorted out, you know undressed and showered and that, you know that for an hour booking that you aren't going to get them out the door for another hour after that. I do like doing the older ones as they are really grateful and polite and you feel like you are doing a real service.

(Barbie)

Sex workers learn quickly that to be able to maximise their earnings or the number of jobs they are able to process, they must be aware of the wear and tear on their bodies and
general health. Thus, sex workers will attempt to manage time very carefully in their client encounters, and therefore will employ strategies or technologies to help minimise physical labour for themselves and at the same time, attempt to maximise client pleasure quickly and effectively (see J. Brewis & S. Linstead, 2000a; McKeganey & Barnard, 1996; O'Connell Davidson, 1998; O'Neill, 2001). Key to this is keeping actual penetrative sex to a minimum. The different techniques used by the massage parlour workers in the previous chapter for safeguarding their bodies are similarly used by sex workers in general (see J. Brewis & S. Linstead, 2000; O'Neill, 2001). Angel comments:

*I have to take care of my body because it’s my work, my tool, so I have to use it to my best advantage, to get a job done well and avoid over use. You don’t put it in any risky situations and if it makes the job easier and better use other things like sex toys to get the client more aroused so that you’re not fucking him all the time. Like you learn to talk dirty if that’s what they like, the way you touch them, the way you move, and talk, and look.*

(Angel)

A sensual massage that is a standard part of the time segment/service in a massage parlour, is often used by massage parlour workers as both a time-filler and as a means to minimise sexual physical labour. The massage serves not only as an arousal or body saving technique, but is also as a marker (Goffman, 1990) to begin the encounter (or in some accounts, to end it). Clare comments:

*I just might sound silly but I always have to start with a massage. I think it shows that you’re in control because you’re giving the massage and the orders, roll over and so on. At least a massage gives you the excuse to have your clothes off and get close and then you can go at it from there. It’s a nice way of starting off and the men still like it and some will even ask to do it to you. I would just feel ridiculous just getting into bed and, getting down to it.*

(Clare)

To safeguard their bodies from the unnecessary rigours of work, sex workers will incorporate non-penetrative services into the client encounter in terms of intimacies or more specialist services incorporating sex toys.
Differentiation within the private escort market is minimal in terms of skills and specialisation. In contrast, O’Connell Davidson’s study describes a highly segmented escort market where women like Desiree are able to reap substantial financial benefit from self-employed prostitution. Though Desiree represents only a small elite group of women, her specialisation in specific services in addition to her high skills in a variety of services, has meant that she has been able to corner specific niche markets (O’Connell Davidson, 1995). Brewis and Linstead (2000), comment that sex workers will specialise or develop their skills to suit market demand and therefore attempt to create niche markets. Furthermore they argue that, “the degree to which the market for prostitution is segmented in particular locations (consumption), and whether the prostitute decides to specialize or not within this market (production)....plays a part” in the shaping of sex markets (Brewis Linstead 2000:259). The creation of niche markets within the escort market are based not only on specialised services such as B&D or fantasy etc. but also on body type, age and ethnicity. As already argued in this chapter advertisements for, larger escorts, mature escorts and Asian escorts regularly appear in newspapers and contact magazines.

Sex workers like Naomi, Claudia, Sally and Teressa operate what they describe as an up-market service providing the client with a particular experience aimed at a particular category of client, the businessman. Naomi provides champagne and oysters, Claudia and Sally operate from “sumptuous apartments” in an affluent part of the city, and Teressa builds ‘special’ relationships with her clients for whom she will buy little gifts for birthdays or anniversaries. To create an up-market experience, an escort will invest time and money into her business to attract the desired type of client. This involves creating a work environment that is more intimate than a client would experience in a massage parlour setting. This inevitably leads to escorts providing their clients with more intimate behaviour:

*I know I’m good at my work because I’m successful and part of that is due to the way I go about it, it’s like I will go one step further for my client. I will provide something more intimate for them, like I like to lick them, I will lick them around their balls along the tummy and thighs it’s nice for them, more of a turn on and in the end that’s what I’m supposed to be doing, turning them on and giving them a pleasurable experience, something that they don’t get at home.*

(Naomi)
In addition to the type of intimate/sensual services provided by escorts like Naomi, there are 'specialist' niche markets in which workers such as Crystal or Jenny provide services that require a high level of expertise. For example, B&D, the use of sex toys on the client, fantasy, adult babies and cross dressing/role play. Crystal and Jenny claim a high level of skill variety in both 'straight' sexual services and B&D. Similar to Desiree private escorts in Christchurch sex workers will offer both specialist and generalist work, (B&D and straight sex) in order to maximise their earnings. Though specialisation requires financial investment for equipment and time spent in apprenticeship, or training in order to acquire marketable skills (as in the case of B&D), the financial rewards do not necessarily equate to those experienced by Desiree (O'Connell Davidson, 1995; 1998). Crystal, for example, has a fully equipped dungeon and cross-dressing wardrobe complete with make-up, wigs, lingerie and stilettos in larger sizes. However, she finds herself in competition with massage parlours as well as escorts offering cheaper rates for what she considers to be inferior or imitation B&D services:

'[y]ou can but try to make the money doing B&D I find that I have to escort as well, do straight stuff, but you have to remember that you've got the parlours offering it (B&D) even though most of them aren't doing what I call true B&D. It is a specific service in which I control what is going on, it's not just slapping someone around and slapping their arse. It's knowing pressure points and knowing where you can inflict pain without doing damage and all that sort of thing in order to bring your client to climax. There are a lot of mind games involved, and after a session you can feel like you've done ten rounds, you feel mentally drained, more so than doing any straight escorting.

(Crystal)

Clients looking for B&D and fantasy services, are largely catered for by both massage parlours and private escorts (including specific B&D mistresses). Two Christchurch massage parlours in particular have cornered the market and established a strong reputation for B&D and fantasy services. Competition for B&D clientele and the increasing number of straight clientele drawn to sample B&D services out of curiosity, encourage a number of sex workers in both massage parlours and the private escort market to cash-in and build some form of B&D and fantasy services into their repertoire. Massage parlours and escort agencies prove to be a good starting point for workers wishing to acquire 'specialist' skills and services, and as a means to access to equipment. Helen, for example, comments that in
order to maximise her earnings and increase her business, she found that she needed to offer a variety of services and jumped at the opportunity to learn different skills while working at an escort agency:

I wanted to learn everything, I wanted to learn B&D and that sort of thing and at the first agency I worked for I learned about doing doubles and B&D. The owner virtually took me into a room and showed me all the instruments and how they were used and virtually I was thrown in and learned from what they wanted. It was a bit of hit and miss in a lot of instances in the beginning, but if you wanted to make the money you had to make the effort to learn as many things as you could especially if other girls were, and now that I work on my own I can't do anything of the heavy B&D stuff, but I'll do light spanking, golden showers and that sort of thing, but I try to cater for what I can.

(Helen)

Like Helen, a large number of escorts in Christchurch offer a wide variety of skills but with moderate expertise in the more specialised areas, thus in a sense collapsing niche markets. The price that they charge for these 'specialised' services often reflects market competition rather than the level of their expertise, with clients making decisions based on 'bargain prices' or 'specials' rather than quality. Thus, differentiation between 'specialist' services provided by Crystal and Jenny compared to the basic B&D/fantasy services provided by Brooke, Helen or Karen, can often be minimal. Women who are able to charge according to their expertise or specialist skills above the competitive market rate for escort services belong to a very small group indeed. Tessa comments:

I will advertise different stuff. I sometimes advertise as a mistress as I've pretty much everything for that. It's quite lucrative for me to provide that type of service. I like to say that I'm not averse to trying new stuff and can say that I'd try most things. You'd be surprised at how many rape fantasies that I've done.

(Tessa, escort)
Self-Management/Self-Discipline

The assertion of control over the location for sex work, requires the demarcation and management of boundaries between work and non-work, to erect and maintain some 'professional' distance. Preparatory work routines and rituals, enable the sex worker to make practical separations between personal and work lives, such as the use of clothing and make-up as an entrance into their work identity. Managing time and establishing some form of routine enables sex workers to establish entrances and exits to and from their work (Goffman, 1990), such as timetables. The use of 'markers' to demarcate work and home is particularly useful for escort workers who work and live in the same location/premises:

I use certain parts of the house for work and I have an ensuite in my large room and that's mine, my area, and at the end of the day I go down the hall and it's my little area. I don't spend much time in this end of the house, only for work. I close the door and close it off at the end of the day and don't go back in until the next morning at 10.

(Chelsea)

Brook ritualistically applies make-up and wears particular clothing for work. In essence, many of the activities of washing, dressing, applying make-up specifically for work, to assume the identity of worker are not dissimilar to those adopted by workers in a wide range of jobs. These activities hold a special significance differentiating all that is work form all that is non-work:

[When I'm at home I'm me, and when I'm at work I'm Brook. I would never wear any of the stuff outside that I wear for work, I mean I'd look like a hooker!! (laughs). They're my work clothes and when I get to work at 11 o'clock in the morning I put on my face and my clothes and I become Brook until 6 o'clock when it all comes off again. It's like clocking on and clocking off, yeah that's how I like to look at it

(Brook)

My research supports the generalised understandings that soft drugs such as caffeine, nicotine, alcohol, valium, amphetamines, marijuana, are widely used by sex workers to keep them awake during the long hours they work. They are used to relax, dull the unpleasantness of the job, to help deal with the mundane nature of service work, to enable
them to play the role that the client requires and distance their work from their ‘everyday selves’ (Brewis & Linstead 2000). A number of sex workers comment that the use of stimulants, drugs alcohol etc. have the potential to compromise their ability to negotiate safe sex, or indeed control client transactions. Though many private escorts confess to the use of soft drugs as a way of coping with the rigours and the mundanity of some tasks/services, they recognise that such use is not without attendant difficulties. The impairment of judgement in particular is critical when assessing, selecting and negotiating with clients. Furthermore when entertaining clients, making conversation for example, concentration and timing are often critical. Claudia and Lola share their thoughts:

I always used to have a few wines when I worked at the parlour, we all did, it helped pass the night and besides there was the bar. The clients were drinking so it was like the sociable thing to do. Working on my own is a bit different. Now and again I might have a couple of drinks just to get me in the mood if it’s a regular that I find hard going to talk to and stuff, but never with a new client, you’ve got to keep your wits about you.

(Claudia)

I like to have a few drinks or a smoke after work, but never at work. I like to be on the mark, you just can’t afford to fuck up when you work for yourself. You can’t go wreaking of alcohol or dope everywhere all over them, it’s just not professional and you have to talk and entertain them, I mean, how on earth can you do that when you are off your face. It’s courtesy. I don’t like dealing with drunk clients so why should they pay for a drunk hooker.

(Lola)

A most visible or publicised strategy for escorts to distance themselves from clients is through the use of condoms. Aside from the health benefits of using condoms for sexual activities, condom use for many sex workers is a symbolic as well as physical barrier between their bodies and those of the clients. Condoms are often seen to be symbolic of

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18 The use of hard drugs in the escort market, like the massage parlour is not unheard of, however, generally workers who have drug habits to support prefer not to work time based services that require more emotional and time investment (non-paid work).
work sex, and thus, workers are often reluctant to use them in their personal life (see McKeganey and Barnard 1996, Ward & Day 1998, Brewis & Linstead 2000). Thus, the condom is often used as a means to remove any intimacy from the encounter. For example, Lola talks about her relationship with her partner Dave. The other women make overt statements about the management of private and work sex:

I couldn't use condoms with Dave, it would be like fucking a client.
(Lola)

[If] they're for work, and I know my partner where he's been and I'm meticulous at work where practicing safe sex is concerned, so I don't see the need for us to use them. As far as I'm concerned it would be too much like work.
(Clare)

I like to use them when I'm working. I don't like the idea of them [clients] being really inside me, at least with condoms you've got a sense of being separated from them, but I can't say that I'm as staunch with them in my personal life, but I'm careful.
(Tania)

I hate the idea of using them in my private life, I mean I've got the responsibility for them every day at work, put them on take them off, make sure they're still there and haven't been whipped off or disappeared. I just don't want to have to do that in my own life. I want to have sex with my man without anything attached.
(Helen)

In addition to using physical barriers such as condoms as a means to establish separation between work and non-work, sex workers will often construct, sustain and reproduce physical and psychological boundaries on a daily/nightly basis. The body of the worker plays an important role in the mediation of self-identity and work or social identity (see Shilling, 1993). Sex workers often develop a 'map' which relates to the parts of the body that they are prepared to use in their work sex and parts which they consider to be 'off limits' to clients (see Brewis & Linstead, 2000, Day, 1990; Edwards, 1993 O'Neill, 2000; Phoenix, 2000). In this way, certain sexual acts and practices are designated to be part of
the professional service and others potentially too risky, intimate or repulsive (see O'Connell Davidson, 1998). Lola comments that she designates certain acts for work and others for her personal relationship:

*one thing that I don’t do now at home and I won’t do now and that’s get on top. I won’t get on top of D anymore because to me it’s totally, well, there’s nothing in it for me because that’s how I do it with most of my clients, and to do that at home with D, there would be no feeling in it at all for me, and it would be a total insult to him. I just don’t want to treat him like a client.*

(Lola)

Amanda claims that she has no difficulty in differentiating between relational and work sex. She defines the acts or services she performs at work as purely physical:

*when I’m with my husband and we’re together it doesn’t even occur to me that it’s the same thing as when I’m at work. It is a totally different thing, because I have feelings for him which I don’t have for anybody else. I can lie in bed and relax and enjoy the time I have with him and here at work I’m always thinking of what I have to do next or I have to see what the client feels about this or that. It’s just different, one is intimate and one is a job. One is sex and the other is making love. I find it very easy to distinguish between the two. I do think age helps, being more mature I think helps me to put things into perspective.*

(Amanda)

Categorising sexual acts in terms of work practices can be subject to individual preference and notions of intimacy, safety and professionalism. For example, the performance of vaginal or anal sex without a condom for the majority of private escorts is viewed as 'unprofessional' work practice and unhealthy and in the context of their private lives these acts are often perceived as intimate and safe. Some private escorts confess to performing what would be considered intimate sexual acts with regular clientele as part of a more personalised and intimate service. They however situate these acts in terms of work and thereby attempt to remove the intimacy. For example, the act of kissing is generally considered by sex workers to be an intimate and personal act that is reserved for personal
relationships and not a part of sex work practice (see Edwards, 1993; Perkins, 1991; Perkins & Bennet, 1985). However, a number of private escorts consider kissing clients (regulars), as a means to enhance the professional relationship and not solely exclusive to personal relationships. Similarly, McKeganey and Barnard (1996), in their study found that the distinctions between private and commercial sex were not absolute in that sex workers would differ in what they considered to be intimate acts and work acts. Furthermore, these 'transgressions' of sex work 'codes of practice' are facilitated by the isolated nature of private escort work. Naomi for example, states that she often performs oral sex on her regular clients without a condom, and allows regular clients certain bodily or service privileges:

[y]ou've got to experiment to see what works and make sure that it's not compromising your health. I like to do a lot of licking and guys really do like that, mostly with regulars and I make sure that they have a shower and I use ant-bacterial soap. I will have a shower with them and scrub their back and make sure that they scrub up good and so it's also nice for them because it's intimate, you know, I lick their balls and if they have a nice clean dick then I will give them oral without a condom on and, I would say that's pretty intimate and I've been doing that for the past 5 years and haven't had any problems. I know a lot of girls aren't comfortable with those sorts of things and I guess it's understandable but that's what my clients expect, and most important is that if I'm comfortable with what I'm doing then they are going to sense that and enjoy it. Kissing too, I do kiss them and yeah I know a lot of girls that I know wouldn't dream of kissing their clients, but for me it's all part of creating an intimate environment. That's why I found it so difficult to have both a relationship and work at the same time. I just couldn't give 100% to both, as you start to lose a sense of what you're doing and who you are, and so I believe it's either one or the other.

(Naomi)

In this way, the more intimate nature of 'private escort work results in individual escorts regularly (re)negotiating their own set of boundaries to suit their service and their personal circumstances. At first glance, many escorts may appear to contravene many of the 'unspoken' rules of prostitution by indulging clients in intimate behaviour such as kissing,
or “licking their balls”, in Naomi’s case. Thus, as Day suggests regular clientele often occupy a “fuzzy” area in between clients (casual) and boyfriends, and can therefore threaten the division between work and home (1990: 105). Indeed it must be noted that individual private escorts may not necessarily want or need to maintain such strict divisions in every encounter. Sally and Rachel explain:

*I decided a long time ago that I was going to set my own standards or limits. If someone was going to tell me something else than that was just hard luck! I won’t do anything that I don’t like or want to do. Like I don’t kiss clients, well I don’t mind dry kisses but not slopping on me. I hate them on my face. No tongues and no kissing on the lips. I find it too personal, it’s something I like to do with my husband. I don’t mind them giving me oral as long as I get to choose, though they often have to be regulars for them to get to do that and have good hygiene which is very important to me so I get to pick and choose who can do it. If someone tries to push me into doing something that I don’t like then I will get off the bed and walk out, although I’ve never had to do that.*

(Sally)

*Each person that comes through that door is going to be different to the one previously and so you can’t say to yourself that this is going to happen and that is going to happen and so I want them to all have a really good time and whatever happens, happens.*

(Rachel)

The possibility of personal taste interfering with the selection or rejection of clients can become very real when performing intimate services. For Desiree it was important not to select or reject clients on the basis of attraction or repulsion and thereby personalise her choice of clients (O’Connell Davidson, 1994). For the most part, sex workers regard clients in terms of ‘jobs’ or ‘appointments’ focusing on the money that the client represents as a means of de-personalising the client (see Day, 1990; Edwards, 1993; McKeganey & Barnard, 1996; Phetersen, 1990; Phoenix 2000). Sex with the client is therefore looked upon as a means to an end.

*In B&D they try to get inside your head and you’ve got to be able to look at what you do and look at it as a job that you do. There are times*
when I've had to draw blood, it was the only way that this client could come, was if he felt blood trickling down onto his penis. They all have their own needs their own limits and moral standards and in the work that I do I feel that I have to be very open minded. I can't just say I'll do this and this and I won't do that. Sex just isn't that simple, you can't offer just one thing and hope to make money that way.
(Crystal)

However, it would not be accurate to claim that every private escort seeks to establish a strict boundary between work and non-work with every client. Some escorts like Teressa, for example derive pleasure from their work and consider some of their clients to be good friends. Teressa claims she feels she can be more flexible with her boundaries because of her life and work experience. Her client base consists mostly of regular clients, many of whom she has known for a number of years and who she considers to be friends. Thus, she confesses to seeing appointments with clients as social occasions, and treats some more personally level by sharing information of her personal life.

I've got clients that I'm still seeing from the beginning, but I never look at them as clients. To me they're friends and I've never talked about them as 'johns' or 'jobs'. I prefer and have done, to build up a really nice friendship with some of these people and I think of them as friends. I get as much pleasure from them as I like to think that they get from me, and I'm not just talking about the sex but building up a real rapport with them. I like to think that I provide a real service. I treat them as I would a boyfriend, so there's not really the façade if you like that's there anymore because, well I like them, I like the people. I'm comfortable with myself and my work, very, and so it makes it easier to treat them more like my friends.
(Teressa)

Caring relationships with regulars are not unknown to occur, and workers have been known to admit to having orgasms or deriving sexual pleasure from sex with clients (McKeganey & Barnard, 1996; Scambler, 1997). However, these incidents are normally regarded within the sex industry by workers as unprofessional and foolish, and workers are therefore often reluctant to report such incidents to each other:
there are some women that I know who do enjoy sex work, I know that I do some of the time. I suppose it's like one of the perks of the job. I wouldn't say that it's brilliant sex all of the time, but it can be loving or caring sex. So far as my sexuality is concerned in work, I can turn it off if I want to, but I don't I don't want to. I don't have a partner and so coming to work is often the only way I get to have back rubs and sex.

(Belinda)

Conclusion

The discussion of private escort work in this chapter has presented the ways in which the discourse of autonomy is drawn upon by private escorts to construct themselves as 'professional' self-employed businesswomen. Autonomy is defined by private escorts in terms of freedom, flexibility and control of their work environment and services. Workers talk about 'being your own boss' and describe themselves as 'businesswomen'. They draw upon the discourses of self-employment and professionalism (see Rainbird, 1991; Salmi, 1997) as a means to craft a work identity that will sustain them and differentiate them from other sex markets. Self-employment for private escorts represents freedom from workplace disciplinary controls like those experienced by massage parlour workers in their daily struggle with parlour management over workplace organisation (time) and sex work practice. In contrast, private escorts claim independence to set their own schedules, services and fees, and the ability to operate discreetly/invisibly from residential addresses.

However, though the discourse of autonomy drawn upon by private escorts presents self-employment in terms of the freedom and flexibility that is often claimed by self-employed workers (see Felstead & Jewson, 2000; Rainbird, 1991 Walkowitz, 1980), private escorts like self employed service workers in general, must negotiate labour market constraints such as, the fluctuations in market demand and competition. Allen and Wolkowitz (1987) critique the idea of autonomy claimed by self-employed workers, by arguing that all labour processes for profit at some stage entail some form or system of control or management. Thus, they contend that the autonomy that is claimed by self-employed workers is only an 'appearance' - it is a 'myth of autonomy'. In addition, Felstead and Jewson (2000) argue that beneath an appearance of autonomy, lie the daily conflicts that workers must negotiate in order to exercise control over their work. In this way, like any other self-employed service workers, private escorts must routinely engage in self-management as a means to
organise their work and render meaning to it. Moreover, though autonomy as understood by self-employed workers is contingent upon the negotiation of local market and legal constraints/limitations, private escorts must also negotiate the social and emotional constraints associated with selling sexual services. In this way sex workers will construct and manage a sex worker identity that enables them to render meaning to their participation in sex work.

The construction and promotion of professional identities by private escort workers is reflective of Zukin's (1995) account of emotional labour among service workers, in which service workers (waiting staff), assemble and draw upon what Zukin refers to as 'cultural capital' as a means to construct a particular style of work. In this way, workers in Zukin's example 'democratise' the relationship with clientele, establishing a working style and identity that is a combination of deference, friendliness, knowledge, embodied skills, educational qualifications, life experience and so forth (1995). Thus, in drawing on Zukin's account of emotional labour, the identity work undertaken by private escorts seems less corrupting and alienating, and based more in authenticity, embodied skills and tacit knowledge. However, the amount of emotional labour and stress that is involved within service or performance work according to Chapkis (1996) and Hall (1990) can vary according to the amount of control that a worker is able to exercise or negotiate in their work. For private escorts, this is presented as less problematic when compared to the experience of massage parlour workers. In addition to the universal preparatory work routines, rituals and discourse of sex work for creating a 'professional' distance between work and personal worlds, control over the location and organisation of sex work allows private escorts to carefully manage and demarcate boundaries for this 'professional' distancing/separation.

Notions of professional work practice drawn upon by private escorts are both similar and yet different to the claims made by the NZPC. The work of private escorts is presented through the discourse of sex workers as 'business people', crafting a sex worker identity that is based on the health, education and empowerment of sex workers. For the NZPC, such discourse is embedded within political advocacy for the decriminalisation of prostitution. For private escorts this discourse is coupled with the illegality of their work. Indeed it is both the illegality and ambiguity of private escort work that secures the anonymity of escorts and therefore, the market. Their 'professional' status is bound up and secured through a precarious and limited autonomy made possible by the ambiguity of prostitution legislation and the informal local arrangements with the police and local
businesses. Ironically then, their claim to being professional workers rests upon their ability to avoid disclosure and therefore the association with prostitution, while the political arguments put forward for the decriminalisation of prostitution threaten to destabilise this anonymity by privileging legality and visibility.
What are you doing?

I'm just lying on my bed. I just got out of a nice hot shower and my body is all warm and soft and I just got my fingers and they are just sliding up and down the lips of my pussy.

Ohhhh....and I bet you've got beautiful lips too.

Mmmmmmmmm....and if I close my eyes its like the sound of you is right here next to me and my fingers follow your words and it's like you are doing it to me.....Hmmmmm.....I bet you have got a beautiful cock haven't you?

Feels good to me love....mmmmmm

Yeah....with your hand wrapped tightly around it...

.....Oh yeah

Stroking it up and down....oh it's mine....I should be doing that shouldn't I?

It would be nice if you were here...mmmm...

Mmmmmmm......I should be there with you....uuuhhhhhhhhh rolling all over you

OOOhhhhh...

hmmmm (slight giggle)...all across you and up and down your body. I'd lay you out on the bed stark naked and I'd sit down between your legs and be on my knees and I'd just start to play with you...one hand would be down and underneath you balls and just stroking them and lifting them up and the other tightly around your cock....so....just nice slow gentle strokes up and down.....and every now and then my finger would come right over the head of your cock and the back down again. I want to watch your body rise and fall....uuuuhhhhuuhhhh and see you enjoy every minute of it.

Ohhh yeah baby
This extract from a phone sex 'encounter' presents an example of '(dis)embodied intimacy' that culminates in an embodied experience (by the performance of masturbation) through the simulation of a sexual encounter. The content of the conversation is sexually explicit and attempts to create, through the use of language, a physical sexual scenario for the purpose of arousal, expression of erotic desire and ultimately, sexual stimulation and gratification. In phone sex encounters, the participants freely explore, often through an elaborate description of action, erotic desire through their fantasy bodies that are constructed ad hoc from shared perceptions, and the lived experiences and ideologies that each participant brings along with them. Through this (dis)embodied communication all things are possible, offering the individuals liberation from the constraints of physical, social or cultural limitations. The telephone enables the participants to cut across spatial, temporal, cultural and gender boundaries to explore a depth of intimate communication that ordinarily may not be possible. Furthermore, the anonymity of the service frees both participants from the stigma associated with 'physical' forms of sex work and pornography.

Similar to B&D or S/M, phone sex is highly ritualistic and theatrical in terms of the emphasis on imagination, role playing and the division between physical and mental states. Brewis and Linstead note that like S/M, phone sex depends as much on the labour of the mind as it does on the labour of the body (2000a). In this way, it can therefore be read as making possible new and renewed forms of pleasure through technology and the refusal of its practitioners to partake in the experience of sexual pleasure through genitally-based, heterosexual, penetrative sexual activities (see Brewis & Linstead, 2000a; Ecstavasia, 1993).

The meaning of 'phone sex' itself fails to belie the true nature of the work. Just like 'massage parlour' or 'escort' it is a fictional term used to hide the ambiguity of the market, its structure and practices, in which operators work both in and out of fiction and reality, inventing and reinventing boundaries and services.

This chapter builds upon the discourse of discretion in which private escorts position themselves as active agents in the organisation of sex work practice through securing their ability to operate discreetly within the suburbs. Invisibility is key to the organisation of both the escort and phone sex markets, an invisibility facilitated through the play on ambiguity. In the case of the phone sex market the absence of legislation positions workers as having to negotiate informal policies in order to hide the true nature of their businesses/work.
The following discussion will consider how phone sex operators in New Zealand organise their work as 'independent' operators who primarily work from their own homes as opposed to the organised businesses that are typical of the phone sex market in the US (Flowers 1998a; Jewell Rich & Guidroz, 2000). The discussion will consider how operators organise and structure their service, the relations they enter into to facilitate their ability to operate and like sex workers in general how they deal with the discrepancies that occur between their work and non-work selves.

**Technology and Fantasy**

It is argued that, relationships within modern society, have become more transitory and fragmented with industrialisation, urbanisation and the rapid development of technology (Altman, 2001; Balsamo, 1996; Bogard, 1996; Flowers 1998; Haraway, 1998; ). Technology both brings together individuals and contributes to creating the social and physical distance between individuals, it also minimises personal face to face contact between individuals by providing for communication to be made from person to and machine to person. The pornography industry has been successful in adopting such technological capacities to serve commercial purposes. In a society where intimacy is often presented as problematic, the pornography industry, and indeed the sex work industry has been adept at using advances in communication technology to respond to an increasing 'alienation' of individuals (see Flowers, 1998a; Williams, 1999). Technology has been used in creative ways to 'reinvent' intimacy and provide the consumer with some security from the 'riskiness' of direct sexual and emotional contact. Phone sex represents another phase of human relations, in which human sexual intimacy is mediated by technology. It provides for a form of 'fast food' style outlets/product for sexual intimacy.

Cyber chat rooms, psychic phone lines, have emerged in a bid to take advantage of the desire for disembodied intimacy. This simulated intimacy replaces physical and emotional contact that is viewed as potentially dangerous, with risks of sexually transmitted infections through the transmission of bodily fluids and the added complications involved in personal relationships. The new mediated intimacy becomes an alternative in the market of erotomania, offering the participant and operator anonymity from the personal or professional risk of exposure, the fear of judgement and the repercussions of expressing "abnormal" desires (King, 1996; McRae, 1997; Bogard, 1994; Flowers, 1998a; Jewell Rich & Guidroz, 2000).

Through the medium of language, operators and callers are able to simulate erotic interaction without seeing or touching each other's bodies. In the United States the
phone sex industry is a billion dollar business and continues to grow in spite of varied efforts to curb its operations and availability (Flowers 1998a; Time, 1999; Macleans, 1999; The Economist, 1999). Popular images and discourse of phone sex in mainstream literature tend to deploy a moral discourse of sterile anonymity and 'sleaziness' in combination with a discourse of risk often associated with sex clubs, strip shows and massage parlours (Metro, 1999; Economist, 1999; Time, 1999; MacLean's, 1999; Broadcasting, 1999; the Listener, 2000).

Flowers (1998a), in her study of a phone sex business in North American presents an exploratory account of the manufacture of artificial intimacy through technological mediation and helps to illuminate the dialectics involved in phone sex and 'disembodied intimacy'. Her study moves beyond a discourse of victimisation and exploitation of women involved in the sex industry to dispel erroneous and narrow representations of sex work. She presents their struggles and the callers as resembling those of everyday relationships. She is not concerned with the meanings of self and persona for the operators, but Jewell Rich and Guidroz (2000) have also produced work on phone sex that goes beyond the prevailing stereotypes found in popular media. How phone sex operators attempt to create and maintain positive self identity while being employed in what Jewell Rich and Guidroz call a "socially stigmatised occupation", is the focus of their study. By attempting to present the realities of the day to day running of the phone sex business in the U.S. both Flowers and Jewell Rich and Guidroz present a new direction in researching the sex work industry.

The very existence of phone sex reveals sex to be a process, a particular type of interaction that is distinct from a physical act (see Flowers, 1998a; Weeks, 1995, Williams 1998). Phone sex points to alternatives to embodied experience and in addition, promotes a 'risk free' pleasure. Thus, phone sex can be read as a service that provides not only for the possibility of ejaculation for the caller¹, but also the forum for communicating, creating, simulating sexual fantasies and fetishes. The product of this service is varied, it can constitute the time of the operator, the fantasy bodies that are created, the orgasm reached during or after the call, the conversation between caller and operator. The product may vary between calls according to the requirements of the caller and the skills of the operator. However, unlike the client encounter within the escort or massage parlour markets, phone sex remains anonymous in the sense that neither party meets. This lack of physical or 'embodied' interaction means that phone

¹ Findings from my research sample indicate that the majority of callers tend to be male, and women who have used the phone sex service have tended to do so as heterosexual women who wish to fantasise about men, to obtain advice concerning sexually arousing their partners or are partaking in a phone sex session with their partner as part of arousal/foreplay. There are specific phone sex lines that cater to the gay market. However this discussion is looking at the 'generic' phone sex line.
sex escapes traditional legislation and regulations that govern ‘embodied’ prostitution. In addition, since phone sex occurs between two consenting adults and is not available to an audience, it also escapes prohibitions levied at pornography. Thus, phone sex is left to informal monitoring and regulations principally set out by the telecommunications supplier, financial businesses, advertisers, media businesses.

The following section will look at the structural requirements for phone sex, the operators, labour market parameters, such as the role of Telecom New Zealand, police registration, advertising, market competition between businesses, methods of payment and the working environment of operators.

**Small Firms and Independent Operators**

The phone sex market enables women to work from home, to supplement an income or indeed to obtain a lucrative main income. The flexibility that the work offers means that women can work around their family responsibilities and work, social or personal commitments. The operators do not have to be beautiful, well groomed or perform any physical sexual acts with a stranger. They do not have to be seen and can therefore retain anonymity in a highly intimate context. Operators can vary in age, background, ethnicity, education, and sexual orientation (Flowers 1998; Jewell Rich & Guidroz 2000). My sample of operators indicates that women in their mid thirties upwards are representative of operators.

**Ruby** has worked in the sex industry for over ten years running an escort agency in addition to working as an escort, B&D mistress and live phone sex operator. She is New Zealand/European, divorced, in her mid forties with two grown daughters. The police clamp down on ‘unregistered’ escort agencies during 1999 in Christchurch forced Ruby to develop her phone sex line into a full-time business supplemented by occasional private escort (larger lady escorts) and B&D work. Ruby operates her live “fantasy sex line” from her home in the suburbs of Christchurch, using a business and home line. The services that she offers are “Fantasy Calls”, “Cross Dressing” and “B&D Calls”. She advertises these services in the adult entertainment column of the local metropolitan newspaper in Christchurch. Ruby ‘employs’ another woman, Lizzie, to take care of the ‘excess’ calls and enable her to have the lines operating from 9.00am to 10.00pm seven days a week. Lizzie used to work as a private escort (and Ruby suspects that she still does, using the fantasy line to contact clients). Lizzie is also New Zealand/European divorced in her mid thirties with three children and receives
an income benefit. Ruby offers callers two methods for payment, the first is a credit card facility which she says she had to “lie through her teeth” to the credit card company to acquire. She charges $15.00 for ten minutes for credit card payments. The second method of payment is a cash option through a phone gambling account where callers pay $10.00 for ten minutes. Lizzie is paid $2.50 for a TAB call and $5.00 for a credit card call.

**Anya** is 48 years old, New Zealand/European, and has been involved in working on phone sex lines for 4 years. She has been running her own business for over a year from the home she shares with her husband and two grown children. She works from a business line in her bedroom and advertises her services in most metropolitan newspapers throughout New Zealand. She first began working as a live phone sex operator by answering an advertisement in the local newspaper that called for girls to work on a fantasy chat line. The live phone sex line business was run by a woman who worked as an operator herself in addition to a full-time (straight) job. She employed 4 girls to take calls when she was unavailable, of which Anya quickly became the most popular. Anya puts this down to “being more of a natural New Zealand girl and I sound like a real woman and not some fake simpering thing”. The decline of the business inspired Anya to establish her own fantasy line from home.

Anya operates a flexible schedule of working hours. She works 7 days a week if she is at home, and will keep her phone on for most of the day and night to receive calls. If she wishes to take time away from work, then she will cease advertising and inform her clients via a recorded message. Anya provides her callers with two methods for payment. The first is a credit card system for which she had to use a more ‘mainstream’ business as a front in order to acquire it. Thus, like Ruby, she had to provide an alternative ‘alibi’ to the credit card company/bank. Anya charges $15.00 for 10 minutes for credit card payments. The second method for payment is the Telecom 0900 line she operates which charges callers $2.99 per minute².

**Honey** has been operating her live sex line from a mobile phone from her home in Christchurch for almost a year. She currently runs a small business that is not related to the sex work industry and will take calls between 6.00am and 8.00am before she goes to work and then again between 4.30pm and 11pm when she returns. Sometimes if it has been really quiet, she will leave the phone switched on all night. She advertises her live sex chat line in the metropolitan newspapers in Auckland and Christchurch as “live chat sexy honey”. Honey is a single/separated, New Zealand/European woman
in her late 30s with a two grown children. She decided to become a phone sex operator as a means to supplement her income and was inspired by a personal experience of phone sex with an intimate friend. Honey describes herself as:

"...a pretty sexy person, and I don't mean in appearance by any means, but I'm at that age when my children are grown, and I don't get any - I don't get very much sex as I don't have partner - and yeah - I'm good at this and I enjoy it. You just need a good imagination and I do have good people skills"

(Anya)

The cost for a 10 minute call is $15.00¹ and payment is sent to a PO Box number either prior or after a call, this is left to Honey’s discretion.

Caroline is in her late 40s, single and New Zealand/European. She runs a phone sex line from her home in Wellington, and is the pivotal figure in her business. Calls go directly to Caroline’s business line and she will either take the call herself or pass it on to one of the three other women who ‘work’ for her. All of the women work from their homes and use this work to supplement their income benefits. Caroline initially became a phone sex operator for, a ‘laugh’ and to relieve the boredom of being home all day. She has been working as a phone sex operator for over 15 years now. She advertises the sex line in the Wellington metropolitan newspapers and occasionally places an advertisement in the Truth. Payment for the service is by credit card only and calls cost $25 per call which has a 30 minute limit (which is rarely exceeded).

Monique is in her late 30s, married and New Zealand/European/Maori. She has worked as a phone sex operator for Caroline for over three years and is one the most requested operators. Monique works from home and organises her availability for calls around her 3 month old baby and three older children. In addition to working for Caroline, Monique operates as an answer service for a number of private escorts for whom she will take bookings etc. Phone sex allows Monique to supplement her partner’s income and at the same time ‘fill in her day’.

“I first started off on those hot gossip lines and that used to be free. I wasn’t an outgoing person and I had a weight problem back then and so didn’t go out and it was

¹ Anya is careful not to advertise the 0900 number and selectively distributes the number to regular clientele, in order not to flaunt the rather ambiguous Code of Practice set out by Telecom.

² Anya considered a number of options of payment methods, which included the TAB account which she was threatened with closure because she failed to keep the account active by using it to place bets (intermittently), obtaining a credit card facility proved costly for the initial set up charges and she considered 0900 numbers to be out of her reach in terms of initial layout costs and the ambiguity of the Telecom Code of Practice in terms of the services she could provide on the line.
nice to do it as a bit of a social thing, then I started to lose weight and got more confidence and thought I should get paid because on these things. A lot of the guys wanted to have phone sex, you know, and I used to get asked a lot to do it and I just thought stuff this, if I'm going to do phone sex then I want to get paid for it, and so I looked around in the local paper”

Caroline pays Monique $10 for each 30 minute call, though Monique confesses that often calls will last no more that 20 minutes at the most (with the odd exception).

**Larry** has been included in this study because of his involvement in the organisation of a successful 0900 ‘fantasy sex’ chat line business. He has operated phone sex lines for 20 years, and was one of the first operators in New Zealand to use the credit card system of payment. Larry’s venture into the phone sex business began in Wellington and later moved to Auckland in the last couple of years. He started out using business lines and then moved onto the 0900 service. Caroline took over the Wellington sex line that Larry had vacated and began to run it independently. The majority of Larry’s phone sex lines today operate using 0900 numbers, and are advertised as ‘datelines’ (done to get around Telecom policy, which I will discuss later). Larry ‘contracts’ or ‘employs’ around 30 operators to run the service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Most of the women who ‘work’ for Larry do so to supplement their income and fit the work around their family commitments. The service is advertised in metropolitan newspapers throughout New Zealand, the Truth, occasionally in contact magazines and on TV4. Larry spends a great deal of money advertising his lines and sees his primary role in the business as marketing a manager. He runs a number of lines at different call rates, with the average charge being $4.99 per minute. Though Larry was keen to participate in this study, he was reluctant initially to divulge information regarding what he considered to be ‘technical information’, how he organised his lines and regulated worker output and also information concerning the commission that he paid his operators (which he said varied according to the skill of the operator).

**Sandy** works as an operator for Larry’s phone sex lines. She is 36 years old, New Zealand/Maori, currently lives with a partner, has two children attending school and is unemployed. Sandy’s participation in this study was undertaken without Larry’s knowledge and I was introduced to her through one of the other participants. Sandy has worked on phone sex lines for almost 7 years, three of which she has worked for Larry and before that she worked for a couple of small independent businesses and also in a ‘co-operative’ set-up with three other women. She works exclusively for Larry at the moment on his 0900 services and has built up a regular clientele for her
service. Sandy works 4 to 5 shifts a week during the day when the children are at school. Though Sandy has never worked as a ‘physical sex worker’, she has acquired quite an extensive knowledge of sex work practices such as B&D, cross-dressing, submission, fetishism and so forth through researching pornographic literature, film etc.

Creating Niche Markets

Phone sex operators pitch their business to market demand. Like private escorts, phone sex operators develop skills to suit the market and the medium with which they work. Ruby, for example, advertises three phone sex line services, ‘fantasy phone calls’, ‘cross dressing’ and ‘B&D’. Her extensive knowledge of B&D and cross-dressing is derived from her experience as a B&D mistress. She has found these services to be popular and has developed a regular clientele. Monique claims that the majority of calls she receives are for fetish and B&D. She reads 'erotic' literature as a means to acquaint herself with the language and practice of fetishism and B&D:

[s]ex books come in very handy and the magazines where they have letters. I do read a lot and I think of them as an investment, and scout around the second hand bookstores for them...they just give you a wider scope for calls, like it is still the ultimate fantasy for a guy to have two females. I mean it is always the quickest way I can bring a guy on, and the letters to the editor are great 'cos you’re getting these guys writing in with all these fantasies and it just give me all this material to play with especially if I haven’t done it myself, so that I can take the calls that nobody else will touch. I can do pretty much everything.

(Monique)

Likewise, Sandy has found that through widening her ‘repertoire’ and sexual knowledge she has been able to increase the number of requests that she receives:

I just want to come across as knowing what I’m doing, and if you haven’t done it before you need to find out how to do it basically! Once you’ve seen a few porn flicks and mags then you begin to see a pattern emerge, and work with it from there, everybody basically starts from scratch at some time”

(Sandy)
Anya provides what she describes as a ‘natural’ service, in which she avoids the ‘over-the-top’ whimpering often attributed to sex line operators. She presents herself as a ‘down to earth’ woman who is open to sexual experimentation and avoids the use of sex industry clichés in her work. Anya explains her approach to her work:

"I have found that by being more natural and not putting on the voice like "hi baby" (exaggerated breathy voice), that the guys respond to me being more of a natural girl, a New Zealand girl and they say, 'oh you sound like a real person,' and they like it that I'm not some simpering fake woman"

(Anya)

Irrespective of the kind of expertise in erotic discourse or counselling skills the operator may have, the limited ability to cater to the ‘impulse caller’, to fulfil the ‘dial-a-sex’ ideal means that some operators are unable to reach a wide clientele and appease market consumption. Operators need to be able to provide immediate access to their service in a bid to get ahead of competitors. This means direct contact with operators for callers which 0900 numbers often facilitate. Some operators who work for Larry claim that they can do over two hundred minutes of call time in a shift (6 hours) or two to three thousand in a month, whereas Ruby may do five calls of ten minute duration in a day. Undoubtedly advertising the service is important and Larry spends around $6000 per month for advertising his 0900 lines throughout New Zealand. However, the success of 0900 lines in general has been due to the ability for callers to be impulsive. With this form of access they do not need to go through a process of payment prior to the call. They simply pick up the phone and the fantasy can begin. Anya finds that clients who have her 0900 number are more likely to use the service spontaneously or make what she calls ‘quickie’ calls more frequently than her regular clients using the business line/credit card option.

**Securing Payment**

Time, the duration of the call and price, the set fee, are clearly defined in phone sex. Calls tend to be broken down into segments with set charges. 0900 numbers are charged per minute, independent operators often charge per 10 minutes but there are those like Caroline who provide 30 minute calls for a set fee. However, reliable methods of payment for phone sex services can be problematic if an operator does not have an 0900 number, and even acquiring an 0900 number as we have seen can be tricky. The next reliable method for payment is a credit card system. To obtain credit card facility, operators have confessed that they had to resort to misleading credit card
companies or banks as to the 'real' nature of their business. For example, Ruby is supposed to be running a secretarial service and Caroline has her business listed as Auto Supplies. It is not uncommon for commercial sex establishments such as massage parlours to register their businesses under a different name. This fictional aspect of sex businesses also benefits clients by assuring confidentiality in terms of credit card and bank statements:

"I basically had to lie through my teeth to get the bank to give me the credit card facility. I tried 3 banks and I told the truth what I wanted it for and they were not interested, not in my credit rating, and they did not worry about me as a person, and they didn't look at my bank accounts and see that I've never been in over draft. So, the next bank I went to I lied and said that I was doing secretarial work from home and they gave it to me straight away and I have been operating for nearly eleven years with no problems at all"

(Ruby)

For credit card payments, the operator must obtain authorisation for the transaction from the card service centre before a call can commence. Operators have been able to streamline the credit card system somewhat for regular clientele by keeping a record of credit card details which they process after the call has been made. Caroline states:

"When it's a regular you don't have to do the checking before the call and just get the girl to call them straight away, and I can do the paper work while that happens. We keep a record of all their details anyway"

(Caroline)

Some clients prefer not to use credit cards and therefore, some operators have organised a means to allow the client to pay by cash or cheque. The 'cash' option that Ruby offers involves a phone gambling account. Callers are given the TAB account details from Ruby, and then they must deposit the agreed some for the call into the account, ($10 per 10 minutes). The caller will then ring Ruby to give her the receipt number and amount of the deposit and she will then verify the deposit by calling TAB for an account balance before ringing the client to commence the call. Caroline will allow regular clients who do not wish to use their credit card, to post their fee to her PO Box. Honey, who didn't want to pay the costs to set herself up with an 0900 number or for credit card facility relies solely on the 'honesty' and patience of clients. Honey's method of operating a phone sex line is far removed from the instant or impulsive 0900 service. She does not operate from a business line, but uses a cell phone for the initial
contact with clients. Payment is by cash or cheque which is sent to her PO Box address. Thus, callers are required to pay before they can have a call, and this can mean waiting for a minimum of a day (depending upon location) before the client can receive a call. Honey uses her own discretion and 'gut instinct' to decide whether or not to allow clients to receive calls prior to payment. In order to compete with other operators, as well as attract and retain regular clients. Honey will often use her home line to call back clients living in the CHCH who have paid in advance or who are regular clients.

"I screen calls much more now than I used to, the number usually comes across the screen of the phone and if it's a landline, then I'm more inclined to take it, and if they're CHCH ones I take nearly all of them and go through with them straight away. I make a point of saying that I have their number and that I will ring them if they don't pay"

(Honey)

For Honey there is a huge risk involved in providing the service before receiving payment. Generally she receives 2 to 6 payments out of every 10 calls. Initially when she first began her service very few payments were received and so she began to seriously screen calls and be more discerning in terms of her callers and has managed to increase the ratio of paying clients. Thus, the bulk of Honey's paying business is from regular clients who will create and account with her, depositing money either prior or after a call. Honey's decision to work with cash payments only and use a cell phone places her at a disadvantage in terms of competing with other operators. However this decision was arrived at from a desire to be completely discreet and invisible in her business in addition to her reluctance to make a financial investment in her venture.

In all cases of payment after the call, operators must trust the caller to keep to the agreement. Thus, operators have developed ways to increase their chances of payment. For example, all operators use 'Caller Display' telephones and will note telephone numbers if they appear on the display, and inform the client that they have their details and will contact the client if payment has not been received. However, this is not a reliable means for extracting payment. Clearly, operators are faced with some risk when negotiating a means for acquiring payment for their service, whether it is relying on the reliability of the callers to pay in cash in lieu of a call, or for them to be able to maintain their 'legitimate business' façade for credit card companies, bank or TAB accounts. Operators using 0900 numbers are also at risk of losing the service if Telecom decide the service is illicit or they risk losing their income if the caller fails to pay their Telecom bill.
The Work Space

Home working is the most common form of setting for the phone sex industry. Larry states that all 30 women who work for him are mothers who are at home for most of the day. For independent operators and “employers,” like Larry, to work from home also means lower overheads, with the only work equipment necessary being a telephone. The flexibility in the structure of this form of work also means that it can be arranged around childcare, part-time jobs and family responsibilities and so forth:

“...mostly everybody is on some sort of benefit and it’s [phone sex] extra money for doing what I’d normally be doing, like sitting in the house as I’m home most of the time and the other ladies have got families and young kids to look after”.
(Caroline)

Working from home allows phone sex operators to remain anonymous. They do not have to physically identify themselves with a specific work location and by extension, the sex industry. They are able to remain invisible to their clients and to other operators. Anya, for example, carries a cordless phone with her when she is gardening or cooking. This is linked to a business line that is installed in her bedroom from which she can receive both 0900 and credit card callers. Thus, she must be prepared to launch straight into a call if she hears the 0900 tone.

“I do have a lot of regulars that know the 0900 number and it can be quite annoying or just damn difficult sometimes because I can pick up the phone and I could be in the middle of cooking or something and I’ve got the two beeps coming at me and then I know it’s an 0900 number and I don’t have time to gather my wits about me and I’m straight into the call. It’s right in my face, and I’m aware that they’re paying by the minute so I have to make that switch from wife to sexy Anya - just like that”
(Anya)

The nature of phone sex means that operators are available for work during specific hours, but are also able to continue with their personal lives when there are no calls. Thus, operators often find that their personal lives and work lives tend to ‘cross over’. It is extremely difficult for operators to erect physical boundaries between work and personal lives other than the use of a different room/area of the house to take calls. Anya and Monique state that they will take calls in their bedrooms away from the family. However, calls for independent operators do not necessarily have a regular
pattern and operators can experience a great deal of down time and thus will carry on with everyday activities in the mean time. Work can easily be disturbed by the unexpected visitor, or slight change in family routines and so forth. For Monique, there is a certain point in the day when her family life and work life cross over.

“There are times when I’m trying to do a call and the kids come home early and are running up and down the hallway shouting at each other”
(Monique)

Caroline finds that unexpected visitors can be problematic:

“One day the lawnmower man came around to fix my lawnmower but I wasn’t expecting him for a while yet and he showed early and I was on a call at the time, and he could see me through the window. So, I had to make signs that I’d be there in 10 minutes and to go around the back of the house where the lawnmower was, and try to carry on with the call”
(Caroline)

Some operators may find that the hazards of working at home can compromise their anonymity

“The other week my mother-in-law popped around to see my husband, and I was on a call at the time and of course when she was leaving she shouted see you and she called out my name - out loud - and of course I’m in the bedroom, and the client heard and asked if I had visitors, and I had to be quick off the mark and think and say no it was my next door neighbours”
(Monique)

However, often the benefits of working from home seem to outweigh the disadvantages, with operators managing and negotiating their work around family responsibilities and commitments

Creating The Fantasy

“[S]ex today is about controlled proximities and prophylaxis”
(Bogart 1994:17).
Communication technologies have increasingly come to play a crucial role in contemporary forms of everyday life and emotional experience (Williams 1998:120). Virtual sex, which I consider to incorporate phone sex, erotic email exchanges, and erotic encounters on chatlines, virtual communities and chat rooms is understood as sexual intimacy between individuals whose physical bodies may never touch. This form of what McRae (1997), calls ‘remote interaction’ has often been classified with “the type of fleeting, anonymous erotic experience that can be obtained in sex/strip clubs, pick-up bars” (1997:74). Indeed ‘remote sexual interaction’ can be viewed as a means to escape the threat of AIDS, strangers, the emotional turmoils of physical relationships and society’s panic obsession with health, aging, diet exercise, beauty and so forth. Sexual technologies deal with the impossibilities of tactile pleasure and are oriented to security, comfort and the freedom of expression. They have enabled us to explore hyperreal sexuality and opened up proliferous means for erotic expression, to release/capture, construct, exchange and satisfy carnal desires without the physical and emotional complexities wrought by physical interaction (King 1996)

Phone sex eliminates the real threats and deficiencies of embodied sexual encounters by offering the caller a more perfect and in a sense a more real experience through simulation, the presentation of the ideal sexual experience and body. This experience is clean, it is ‘disinfected’, there is no exchange of body fluids and it does not communicate disease(s), but focuses upon desire. It is easily accessible and one does not have to develop a relationship with their phone sex partner. King (1996) argues that, “phone sex becomes more perfect than the reality of sexuality, because it promotes the presence of pleasure, the virtue of the (male) orgasm in the absence of disease”. Phone sex presents the caller with the possibility of ‘instant gratification’, a certain freedom of expression and experimentation beyond one’s own real-life limits. Though other sex markets such as massage parlours and private escorts, strive to offer the client a fantasy experience, they are still nonetheless bounded by physical and personal limitations/restraints. Physical sex workers have ‘professional’, personal and physiological boundaries that they construct around their work. Virtual sex or phone sex allows the traditional physical boundaries of sex work to be expanded. Operator and caller are able to push the boundaries of the scripted encounter of the massage parlour or private escort service:

"The descriptions are all purely physical and of course they all want someone who is going to masturbate with them and getting them to believe that you’re masturbating and having an orgasm is the thing”

(Ruby)
Thus, who is the ‘girl’ that the caller embarks upon his sexual fantasy with?

**Fantasy Girls: fact and fiction**

"Telesex constructs a domain in which all the women are beautiful, always ready and always satisfied, a space in which the men are skilled lovers, with large pricks and beautiful bodies”

(King 1996:97).

The real world often invades the fantasy world through the ideals of physical attractiveness taking a central part in the negotiation of the fantasy. Flowers (1998:42) argues, that if the sole intention of callers was to simply ejaculate, then it would matter less what the operator looked like, whether she had green eyes, blonde hair or a double D cup. However, bodies do matter in spite of the fact that there is no physical face to face interaction between caller and operator and physical descriptions become vital. Generally, phone sex calls begin with the client requesting the physical descriptions of the operators available. Callers will often make a choice of their fantasy partner based on physiological criteria. In some cases clients will ask for a particular body type. Operators are rarely asked to describe their personalities, interests, passions, or personal preferences in the initial contact with callers. The use of auxiliary characteristics (frequently fictional), which actually have no real bearing on the job performance of the operator, (since they are unable to be seen or touched), are nevertheless crucial to the creation of erotic fantasy on the telephone and evidently are open to manipulation by operators:

"I might be redheaded and blue-eyed or strawberry blonde. It depends on how I feel and what I think the client is after or what they say they want"

(Monique)

The creation of the ‘fantasy character’ or ‘persona’ to be used in the interaction with the caller is an important part of phone sex work. It is pivotal in the creation of the fantasy and also for identity management/construction of the phone sex operator. For the caller, the character must be believable and yet at the same time unbelievable, she must represent the ‘ideal’ girl, perfect proportions and ever ready and ever willing while at the same time, unobtainable (Flowers 1998). The fantasy girl is desirable only as long as she remains abstract, for with reality she achieves imperfection. For the operator, the fantasy girl or ‘persona’ is used to separate or distance herself from her
work so that she may explore or cross boundaries that she would normally find
problematic and can be used to rationalise participation in certain discourse. There is a
lot of freedom in having someone else take the rap for any behaviour that might
normally violate an individual’s sense of moral or ethical ideals. Thus, by separating
herself from her on-line persona via the construction of a fantasy body/character, an
operator effectively removes herself from any moral or ethical debate. Ruby uses her
“Ruby persona” to greet the clients when they call, making it easier her to differentiate
between the formal business self who negotiates with the client and her ‘call’
characters.

“I generally greet the client by saying, ‘good afternoon, thank you for
calling, how can I help you?’ - and then the first question is normally -
tell me about it. That’s all they’ll say - tell me about it - and then how
many girls are there and what do they look like. Some might even say
they’re looking for a girl who looks like this and does this.”
(Ruby)

Operators have the freedom to create personas free from physical constraints, so that
they can be slim-waisted, buxom, tall, or blonde etc. Having said this however, the
construction of fantasy characters tends to be restricted or contained by the gender
ideals of the callers. Just as in the construction of cyber bodies, phone sex characters
often display exaggerated masculine or feminine physical characteristics. “We find
giant pumped-up pectoral muscles on the males and enormous breasts on the females”
(Springer 1991:488). Flowers (1998), in her study of a phone sex business, found that
operators tended to take their own best qualities and emphasised these within a context
of what she called a “Barbie-doll framework” (:35). I found the same to be true in my
sample of phone sex operators, in which, operators based their characters on their real
selves, which they then revised into a ‘fantasy self’, one that took the best physical
qualities and talents of the original but which also fitted the cultural stereotypes and
ideals of the callers.

“What do I look like is the first thing they want to know - can you
describe yourself - I describe a younger version of myself really. I say
I’m an attractive brunette with long hair, I’m busty but I’ve got a nice
figure - I used to wear bikinis and sexy clothes when I was younger.
I’ve got green eyes and I’m about 27 but some guys think I’m younger.
I stick to just the one character as I would find it confusing to have
more...”
(Anya)
Caroline has found certain physical descriptions to work better than others:

“I found out that if I’m a redhead it works every time - red heads can cross over to people who like blondes and brunettes - and well I start off saying that I’m not skinny and I’m not fat, I’m somewhere in between, and I always tell them that I’ve got nice tits and then they ask me how big they are and then I try to figure out what kind of size they’re after and it’s all a bit of bluff really”
(Caroline)

The descriptions of the fantasy operators are very similar to the descriptions offered by parlours and private escorts. There is an emphasis upon breast and dress size, hair and eye colour, and a use of ‘standard’ adjectives such as, curvaceous, voluptuous, ample, slender, buxom etc. Though physical descriptions follow the ideals of cultural attractiveness, they are brief and general enough to allow the caller the space to fill in the gaps and construct the body of his ideal woman.

“Sandy has large breasts, though they depend really on what size the client likes so they can go up and down. She’s curvaceous, a slender waist, has never needed to go mad at the gym and exercise - she’s just naturally gifted with a good figure, blonde, blue eyes”
(Sandy)

Honey also has a standard type description that she gives to callers:

I describe myself - Honey - as slim, long legs, well proportioned breasts with large nipples. I’ve got a slight golden tan all over my body as I like to sunbathe naked in my garden. I’ve got strawberry blonde shoulder length hair, I’m quite athletic and so my body is well toned and I have heaps of energy”
(Honey)

Monique states that she generally has three main characters that she uses for her calls.

“Now I’ve got three but they can change you know to what the client wants. There’s Justine, and she is blonde with blue eyes, and she is just the fuckable type, and of course then there’s Celeste who is dirty, rude, and she is a red head with green eyes and we are all over 5’8"
and we are all thin but both have got big boobs - and I'll tell you something now - I'm totally none of that, but it gets them off and then there's Monique she's dark and exotic, she's the mistress”
(Monique)

The physical characteristics that the operators describe to their callers can be fluid and changeable, that is to say that once operators commit themselves to a description of their fantasy bodies, they are able to carefully modify parts of it in accordance to the client’s preference. For example, in Ruby’s recorded call sessions, she was often asked by callers if she is ‘shaven’ (shaves her genital area). At the onset of the call, Ruby has to commit herself to description of her character based on an idea of what she thinks the caller wants, derived from a brief conversation. The following narrative illustrates how Ruby carefully manipulates her descriptions to fall in line with the client’s imagery of his fantasy girl:

C Are you shaven?
O There’s not much hair on it....anyway, cos I've got very fine hair...but do you like hairy cunts?
C Yeah I do
O Do you like touching it?
C Yeah
O Mmmmmmm...there’s some there....like there’s a lot there ...but it’s just that you can’t hardly see it because it is so fair and long....it’s not black but really fair....and there’s enough to run your fingers through.....really silky ......do you like that? (giggles)
C Oh yeah...

The physical characteristics of the phone sex characters or personas may differ somewhat to the ‘real’ or physical body of the operator, however, the characteristics of the persona and the circumstances of her stories are more often located within reality. In general, workers in interactive jobs, such as sex work, are called upon to make use of their personalities, looks and emotions in addition to physical and intellectual capacities. Flowers (1998) found that, basic personality factors such as compassion, warmth, a sense of humour are something that operators tend not to fake and will use in order to give their characters a sense of authenticity or depth. However, the extent to which such factors are introduced into the interaction with the caller can be specific to individual operators. Sometimes workers in interactive jobs manipulate their identities more self consciously than do workers in other kinds of jobs (Leidner 1991). In a study of fast-food workers, Leidner found that workers’ identities were not incidental to their work
but were an integral part of it, and therefore workers were forced to revise their own moral ideas about personal interaction, such as issues of sincerity and manipulation and so forth. “Workers who feel that they owe others sincerity, individual consideration, non-manipulativeness, or simply full attention may find that they cannot be the sort of people they want to be and still do their jobs adequately” (Leidner 1991:156).

The dilemma of losing the ‘self’ through the ritualisation of personal characteristics such as friendliness and sexiness can make service work generally problematic for workers (Leidner 1991, 1993; Flowers 1998; Hochschild 1983). Leidner found that participation in scripted service interactions for example, lead to “cynicism and defensiveness that affects people’s understanding of social relations including their own sense of power, their expectations of other people, and their beliefs about their obligations to others” (1993:230). Thus, Leidner (1991, 1993) found that though service workers were told to be themselves on the job, they were also told to be cheerful and polite at all times. They were expected to adjust their moods and demeanours to the demands of the job and to learn to handle customers in ways that might be very different from their ordinary styles of interaction. This meant smiling when they did not feel like it and behaving cheerfully and deferentially to people of every status with every attitude. Some workers were able to redefine aspects of their work to establish some control in interaction with customers. This was often done by cultivating certain qualities within themselves that they used in their work, and reinterpreting these qualities in a positive and empowering way. For example, success at work required them to take on a deferential manner, it was reinterpreted as a matter of skill in manipulating situations, not as servility. Similarly, accepting abuse calmly was interpreted as a refusal to let someone else dictate the terms of the interaction, and not as a loss of control. Thus, Leidner (1991, 1993), suggests that this allowed service workers to accept working conditions that might otherwise have been seen as frustrating, demeaning and powerless. Similarly, phone sex operators reinterpret what they are doing so that they can rationalise their involvement in the fantasies they construct.

“I feel that what we do is being creative, acting, having fun and I don’t intend to manipulate anybody. I’m only lying so far as I’m telling them that I’m 18 years old and a redhead when in fact I’m a 51 year old blonde, but they don’t want to hear that bit - after all - what it is - is it’s adult entertainment - so....”

(Caroline)
Phone sex in particular entails frequent and heavy application of rituals of friendliness, sexiness, empathy and so forth. Thus, in an attempt to redefine service work and establish a means to resist the monotony, insincerity and disempowerment of ritualised work, phone sex operators often incorporate a little of their ‘selves’ into the fantasy character.

“I mean there is a part of you that has to come through if you’re pretending to be a different person because you want to do a good job and so there is some real you in there somewhere. Like, I think for me it is my compassion it’s part of my nature. I’m a good listener and I genuinely want to help people, and I guess, at the end of the day I want to feel good about what I do”
(Anya)

Operators generally present their work as ‘honest fun’ rather than manipulative or powerless. They construct an identity in which they are educators, counsellors, actors and so forth, rather than helpless victims or liars etc.

“I’m acting this character on the phone and she’s versatile, she has to be to fill their fantasies, but a lot of this work is talking to the guys as well as the sexual stuff and getting them off. So, there has to be something genuine in there. I mean some of the time you get to hear some real intimate stuff - a lot of them just want to talk to you to off load - and you’re there to talk back and listen. That’s the thing, you know, people think that this is all just about “oh yeah baby do it to me harder”! (laughs)
(Sandy)

Thus, phone sex operators often find themselves managing a number of identities, each of which incorporates an aspect of their real selves, such as compassion, sense of humour and so forth, in addition to the fictional characteristics of their fantasy persona. According to Turkle (1995), the idea of multiple identities (in the technological age) does not so much rest at the margin of things or seem unreasonable. She suggests that “[m]any more people experience identity as a set of roles that can be mixed or matched and whose diverse demands need to be negotiated” (1995:180). Indeed, the advent of the internet in particular has become significant in terms of the construction and reconstruction of self, allowing the individual the freedom to indulge in ‘self-fashion and self-create’ virtual personas. It can not be ignored that traditional ideas of identity have been tied to notions of authenticity that virtual experiences actively subvert.
However, Turkle (1995) points out that the 'multiple selves' that emerge in disembodied communication are linked to a central self and are not distinct entities since they share core elements of humour and personality which remain constant, though they may vary in details and physical descriptions. Furthermore, these 'selves' are not created out of thin air, but emerge from a limited set of pre-existing possibilities and experiences. Thus, the characters that the operators construct are just as real as they are fictional.

Like any other form of interaction, phone sex is constructed within pre-existing contexts and assembled from a mix of belief, cynicism, pretence and sincerity which all go together to produce a tenuous façade. Each fantasy relies on both participants' commitment to the story line, and if either party in the phone sex interaction alters the story line/fantasy in an inconsistent or inappropriate way, the constructed reality is easily destroyed (Flowers 1998). Thus, operators find that some callers will remember or identify with characteristics of their fantasy personas and therefore found themselves constructing a background for these personas. Some operators will even alter their voice, or adopt a speech impediment to make their character more 'real'. Ruby clearly differentiates between her on-line characters.

"The business and money side of things is done by me, Ruby, and then I have two other characters to do the calls. So, the callers get to know that I'm Ruby. I answer the phone and I run the phone line, and that there are other girls who do the calls. It is a little bit deceptive, but after all, it is a fantasy call. The other two are Mandy and Casey and I have to be totally different and totally believable and so I've created these two different characters and they have a whole life of their own and I have to remember everything about their lives right from when they first had sex, and the callers will ring back and remember what you told them - yeah - and so I have this whole different life as these characters. They even talk differently, trying to be three different voices and making it believable is not easy!"

(Ruby)

Anya found that she needed to make her character more three dimensional:

"I found that I had to create a real person, a background for my character and one that I would remember but be able to alter a bit if need be because I found that a lot of the guys would ask me questions about myself and I had to be careful to be consistent with what I said -
and so the next time they rang they would ask me - 'oh so how did the weekend go or did you pass your exam'. So I'm Anya the trainee beautician and I'm doing this to earn money for my fees"

(Anya)

Some operators will display a certain pride in their characters, in that they display or represent the best part of their inner selves. All of my participants stated that it was fun or even “liberating” to have the freedom to be “anyone you want to be”. In Flowers’ study (1998), operators often mentioned the ‘unique’ qualities of their characters and their ability to adapt to a wide variety of situations which the operator herself would find difficult to negotiate. Monique, for example, comments on the unique qualities of her characters and their ability to adapt to a variety of situations.

“..with Angelique you don’t want to mess around, she’s a mistress you know and you don’t fuck around with her, and she deals with slave type of guys into slave fantasies - water sports, things of that nature - I mean I like Angelique. I’d love to be able to do something like that. You know how guys shit on you, well, it would be one way to get back at it - to the feelings that you have inside of you - and it would give me a great sense of satisfaction - that you can give them shit and there’s nothing that they can do about it. They love it of course, and it gives me a great satisfaction when I’m Angelique I get that sense of total power sort of thing”.

(Monique)

The variations in character, though real to the operators, can seem very slight to the onlooker. The characters appear to be very much the same, in that they are an ‘ideal pornographic woman’. However, having said this, the fine differences are intriguing, subtle inclusions of an element of individuality which give the character some sense of ‘realness’, which comes from an investment of the ‘real self’ by the operator.

**Fantasy Firms**

The method of learning by ‘doing’ is the means by which knowledge in the sex industry is acquired by sex workers, and the phone sex market appears to follow the same pattern. Similar to Orr’s workers (1990;1996), physical sex workers will pick up skills and techniques from their peers, or in some cases, the management of commercial sex businesses will endeavour to train workers. However, the invisibility of phone sex operators in New Zealand, in that they tend to work from their homes, means that they
very rarely come into contact with other workers. Indeed the anonymity of the work
does not allow for operators to observe or interact with fellow operators even less so
than in the case of private escorts. Business operators like Larry who ‘employ’ a large
number of operators, give little guidance in terms of the skills needed for this form of
work. Sandy recounts the extent of her training:

“It wasn’t what I’d call a training session, basically all he did was say
to me that, he explained how the 0900 service operated, you know how
calls came in and that, but nothing about the things that you talk about,
what you say, or how you can get away with it”
(Sandy)

Larry will give each operator a general/vague idea of what is expected of them in terms
of call content, but is more specific when he addresses working hours and his
expectations of ‘reliability’.

“Well what I say when I take on a girl is that we will keep it to strict
adult fun. So, you know what two consenting adults do or talk about is
their own private business. They might get hard core callers, or
paedophiles, but I say that it is up to her discretion as to whether she
wants to continue with a call, but I want them to be reliable, to log on
and log off at the right times”
(Larry)

The skill requirements of a phone sex operator are rarely acknowledged, with the
general assumption that it is just a matter of “dirty talk” on the phone (Flowers 1998;
may be considered a natural ability, some acts, phrases and emphases used in phone
sex interaction are not innate knowledge and must be learned, such as fetishes, B&D,
S/M and so forth. Sex usually involves as many of the human senses as possible and
sight, touch, taste, smell, hearing, all work together to heighten the erotic sense.
“Consciously or unconsciously phone sex workers translate all the modalities of
experience into audible form” (Stone 1995:6). In doing so, they take an extremely
complex and highly detailed set of behaviours and condense them into a series of
compressed images which are communicated to the caller through language and vocal
noises and in some cases, the odd sound effects. At the other end of the line, Stone
suggests that these ‘dehydrated’ images are then reconstituted like an instant meal by
“I try to work with my voice and use it to the equivalent of women using their bodies. I’m able to use my voice to get the clients to listen and to do things, the controlling aspect works well for me with the B&D calls...particularly when all they’ve got is the voice”

(Ruby)

From the initial ‘hello’, the operator must try to ‘read’ the caller, to ascertain the kind of sexual fantasy and sexual body, the caller desires often from a minimum of cues. The objective of all operators is to get the client to return to the service and become a ‘regular’ and therefore they must offer a service or create a fantasy that will entice the client to call again. Thus, for independent operators in New Zealand, this means the more personalised service which does not rely upon a generic script, but rather carefully constructing a fantasy sexual scenario particular to the caller that is often based upon pornographic stories/images/scripts.

“Every girl is different as I’ve talked to everyone doing calls for me. Some will use stuff like penthouse for ideas, but, well, you draw on life experience as well I suppose. We all know what we like done to our own bodies and things and so it’s just a variation on that”

(Caroline)

Operators who work from 0900 numbers are under pressure to keep the caller on line and keep the minutes and money ticking over and therefore, must carefully manipulate the conversation and the client. It is not uncommon for operators to use ‘padding out’ techniques. These generally include personal introductions, where the operator will try to strike up a ‘non-sexual’ conversation with the client.

“You’re under pressure to keep the caller on the phone, you don’t want to just get straight down to business because that could be over in literally a couple of minutes as some of these guys are already worked up when they pick up the phone and they just want you to finish the job for them. So you have to ‘pad it out’ a bit, you know, get on talking with them - how was your day, what kind of guy are you, I bet you’re bla bla, you know you have a great voice - that sort of thing, you know like you’re sitting there having a chat with them - tell them what you’re wearing, what you’re doing or thinking and what you’d like to be doing”

(Sandy)
Phone sex fantasies will often follow a basic formula that is then adapted to the individual caller. Thus, a foot fetishist for example, will want to hear about what colour the toe nails are painted, that the skin is supple and smooth. The colour of the polish might be pale pink on dark suntanned feet or dark red on pale pink feet. The content may vary in detail according to messages that the operator can read from the caller, but the form tends to be consistent, in that the foot fetishist wants to hear about feet.

Often lesbian acts or the discussion of lesbian sexual activities appear high on the fantasy request list for male callers. Operators who have never taken part or witnessed these activities must learn to resort to the standard form of pornographic literature that deals with the topic.

“They will believe what you say a lot of the time because it is the way that you put it across to them that they believe you. You have to sound sincere and convincing. A lot of them like to talk about you and another woman which is something that I've never done, but I have seen movies with other women together and even if I hadn't I know what I like being done to me and I only have to replace the man with a woman and there's the fantasy, and it doesn't matter if it is a woman or a man sucking on your breasts you know what it feels like so you go from there”

(Ruby)

The same techniques can be used for simulating sex acts like anal sex:

“I've got a very vivid imagination, I've tried and read about a lot of things too and so I know what they fantasise about, and for some unknown reason guys out there tend to go crazy about - they go crazy over the fact they can poke you up the bum - not my idea of a good time, and I well, sort of just imagine that he's there with his dick and he's not doing it up my bum - he's doing it somewhere else”

(Monique)

Thus, what the caller experiences as spontaneity is actually the product of planning and design to a certain extent, however, that is not to say that operators exhibit any ingenuity and spontaneity in their work. Some women have stated that they find it is sometimes impossible to follow a set script or routine in their calls since the callers are not entirely a homogenous group. Operators have found threat they need to think quickly on their feet so to speak, in order to change ‘tack’ if a particular approach is not working in
terms of the fantasy or achieving the desired goal for the caller. An operator needs some knowledge of particular pornographic scripts to predict the caller’s expectations and provide a basis for the fantasy. The caller in turn, needs complementary knowledge so that he can supply cues about the fantasy he wants to pursue.

“You’ve got to know what they want, if you haven’t got them to talk in the first 2 minutes then you’ve lost them. You don’t know what a client wants until you turn around and say something like - ‘I want you to imagine that I’m standing right in front of you, now what would you like me to do to you?’”

(Sandy)

As is the case with sex workers from other markets, phone sex operators will often keep notes on their clients, the kind of fantasy that they like, the character they have used in the call, certain quirks of the caller, conversations snippets and so forth. The notes can vary between workers and is an attempt to both personalise the service for the client, are also a means to aid the sex worker to do her job more efficiently.

“I try to write things down - about the call - like what I was wearing for a call. I was in a grey satin outfit for this last call. Some of them get off on your lingerie and will remember every detail. It’s good to know if he was a hard one to get off, what gets him off quickly, anything he likes to talk about in particular. I mean, it is easy to get them mixed up when you don’t have faces to go by, and this way it’s like putting a face to them”

(Monique)

Operators use a variety of techniques during a call to simulate/create a fantasy such as, vocal cues, language, voice inflection/emphasis, patterns of speech and so forth.

“I tell them how certain sensations feel and you have to go - ”uh I love that“ - and then say how it feels to you, they like that. It’s like they are actually there, that he is actually doing it to you and that gets them really stirred up. You’ve got to tell them that you like their hands on your body, how their hands feel and the way that they kiss you, what you taste like, what you smell like”

(Ruby)
In addition, some operators will use ‘props’ for sound effects in order to create a more 3D audio effect to their fantasies. Monique states:

“...it’s always great to have a bottle of hand cream next to you and that way you can get that nice sloshy sound because some of them want to hear if you’ve got a lovely wet cunt, so I do some sound effects for them, or sometimes I’ll use a cup of coffee if it’s a very very wet cunt, and I’ll stick my fingers in there and slosh it around and say ‘ooooo it’s very very wet’ and that really gets them going. You’ve got to be inventive”

(Monique)

Ruby will use sound effects to enhance the B7D experience:

“I keep a few straps and chains and things handy for the calls where the client wants to be whipped or tied up or something, and you find yourself having to slap the bedside table or I’ve got a stool with a plastic cushion top and that makes a good noise”

(Ruby)

Monique has learned to use anticipation as a means to arouse her clients. Once Caroline has received authorisation for a credit card payment, she will pass on the caller’s telephone number to Monique who then returns the call and begins the fantasy. Monique will rarely phone the client directly, and will wait 5 to 10 minutes. Monique enjoys the power that this gives her and increases her ‘unobtainability’ in the eyes of the caller.

“I like to make them wait 5 minutes before I call them back even though Caroline is telling me that they’re waiting for the call. It’s the anticipation you see, and of course I will tell them the reason I’m 5 minutes late is because I wanted to get dressed into these really nice things for them and of course it makes them feel special that I’ve actually gone out of my way to get dressed into something sexy for the call. I have this one client and he wants to know the last time you got fucked and if you got fucked that morning, so of course if Caroline rings to tell me that I have a call with him then I tell her to tell him that I’m busy and to ring back in an hour, and this will get this guy really

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4 This is also the case for regular callers who may request Monique directly. Monique will return the client’s call once she has been notified by Caroline
excited and he won’t want to get somebody else. He has to ring back in an hour and so of course, an hour dead on and he rings back, and so Caroline rings me and asks me if I’m ready for his call. Then I’ll ring him and I go, ‘now why did you have to interrupt me having a good fuck’, you know, and that just gets him going!”
(Monique)

Anya has a client who likes to recreate the fantasy of Anya wearing her ‘big black boots’, in each call. Thus, she will put on a pair of shoes and walk up and down on the tiled floor in her ensuite bathroom so the client can hear the sound of her ‘big boots’.

Sandy finds that she often gets requests from clients who want to hear her perform bodily functions such as urinating.

“I get the odd ones who want to hear me pee, and that’s ok if I want to go, that doesn’t worry me”
(Sandy)

Operators have found that their work has been a big learning curve, in that for most of the participants, started off without any knowledge of the sex industry and found themselves immersed almost immediately without any formal training.

The Fantasy Product

“For fast relief call now...you won’t be disappointed 0900339999
(The Truth 24/5/02)

“Mistress Krystina B&D & S/M, kinky phone domination 021 102 2805”
(The Truth 24/5/02)

“Fantasy phone calls ...phone 366 7001”
(The Press)

So far the discussion has looked the actors involved in the organisation/structure of the phone sex market. I now want to consider the product, what is being bought and sold. The service is defined by time segments, callers buy segments of the operator’s time for set a price. The above advertisements refer to fantasy, desire, relief and domination. The commodity being sold could be the fantasy that is created, the fantasy bodies
through which erotic/sexual intimacy is shared. There is also the emotional labour of the operator which enables her to create the persona, the fantasy girl. It could be the physical orgasm of the caller. Like all other commercial sexual practices encompassed by (western) sexual ideology, phone sex demands pleasure as evidence of its "value" (King 1996). Orgasm is considered the aim of most 'embodied' or 'real-life' commercial sexual encounters, why should phone sex be any different? King (1996), argues that in phone sex, 'the orgasm' provides the material proof of the hedonistic virtue of the service, particularly in view of its 'artificiality'. Thus, embodied orgasm for King, brings the fictional and real worlds together "telesex goes beyond the masking of the difference between the imaginary and the real, characteristic of seduction, to threaten this difference by becoming at once imagination and reality" (King 1996:97)

In 'embodied' commercial sex, such as the massage parlour market or the private escort market, the same ambiguity exists in terms of identifying the actual product/commodity that is being sold. It could be the sex worker's time, the hiring of her body, or the sexual service that she provides such as a 'hand job', a spanking or a golden shower. It could equally be the embodiment of a fantasy that is lived out in the interaction between client and sex worker or the construction of what Ecstavasia (1993) refers to as the BwO (body without organs), something that is both real and fictional that can never be reached or fulfilled, an unachievable desire to be followed and never owned (Deleuze & Guattari cited in Ecstavasia 1993). Indeed 'the beauty' or the attraction of the sex industry is the many possibilities that it presents for people in order to indulge in their fantasies, desires, needs, fetishes and so forth.

The sexual intimacy that takes place on a phone/fantasy sex line does not involve the participants touching or seeing each other's 'physical bodies'. It can be argued that what takes place in the phone sex encounter is both embodied and disembodied, both real and fictional. Put simply, the participants are physically present on the end of the phone line and the caller generally masturbates during the call\(^5\), while at the same time he partakes in simulated sex with the operator. Thus, what is being sent back and forth over the telephone lines is not just information, but bodies (Stone 1995). It has been generally assumed that 'erotics' implies 'bodies', with the body being at the centre of any erotic interaction and its concomitants. Indeed, erotic sensibilities have tended to be mobilised and organised around the idea of physical bodies (Stone 1995, (Balsamo, 1996; Turkle, 1995; Williams, 1998). In phone sex, though descriptions are invariably

\(^5\) The respondents in my study and the majority of those in the study undertaken by Flowers (1998) have stated that calls generally conclude with the caller reaching orgasm through masturbation.
and quite directly about physical bodies and what they are doing or what is being done to them, these bodies are nevertheless fictional (Flowers, 1998). As Ruby states:

"You don't really talk about masturbation because when I talk to them I talk to them like I'm there with them, doing it to them, and then they complete the circle by masturbating which gives them the feeling of what I'm talking about. I always talk about being there with them and we are both having sex together"

(Ruby)

The bodies that are used in phone sex are not literal bodies but figurative bodies that are constructed from a variety of sources which rely upon a diverse array of tools and techniques for them to be created and maintained (Brewis and Linstead 2000). These bodies are based on representations of women as objects of desire, she is a buxom blonde, she wears a ‘G’ string, she has painted toe and finger nails, she is ready to please and be pleased, and so forth. The construction of the fantasy body has some of the attributes of a fetish according to Stone (1995), since the phone sex encounter involves the mobilisation of desire or expectations of desire in the absence of an object/body of desire. “A fetish is something not usually considered to be erotic but which possesses erotic appeal for certain individuals” (Brewis & Linstead, 2000):130). Ecstavasia (1993) describes fetishism whereby the client constructs the object of his desire (his fetish) by piecing together images, memories, fantasies and the anticipation of orgasm. The phone sex operator contributes to this fantasy ‘body’ by presenting pornographic scripts and images, her voice, part of herself and character she constructs for the interaction.

In an attempt to understand the transaction between client and sex worker, Ecstavasia (1993), has applied the concept of Deleuze and Guatarri’s ‘the Body without Organs’ (BwO) to her study of private escorts in the U.S. She asserts that both client and sex worker have a BwO which she describes as desire, “it is an assemblage of various bodies” (Deleuze & Guatarri cited in Ecstavasia 1993:186). The BwO can incorporate the client, the sex worker, memories/images of ex-girlfriends, the girl next door, a stripper, the objects of desire such as stiletto shoes, fishnet stockings, women’s bodies through images in magazines, porn movies, television, advertising and so forth. Thus, the BwO is built on past, memories and media images and is oriented towards the future, but can never exist in the present (Brewis & Linstead, 2000)). “The BwO is a program, a limit which marks the edges of the plane of desire - it can never be reached, fulfilled. The BwO is both inside and outside the concrete, both inside and outside the abstract” (Ecstavasia 1993:186). Since the BwO is unattainable it is therefore,
unbounded, forever shifting, ‘deterritorialized and is only available by proxy. The BwO can vary, Ecstavasia suggests that there are clients who prefer to have just one BwO, and there are others who prefer to alternate between BwOs or explore different BwO elements, and there are those who want to be surprised and prefer a more fluid encounter. In addition, there are those who just want to talk, which constructs a different type of BwO. Thus, Ecstavasia’s interpretation and application of the BwO to escort prostitution allows for an understanding on the working of desire and the social regulations that attempt to contain it.

Applying Ecstavasia’s theory of BwO to the phone sex market and the caller/operator encounter, opens up possibilities for understanding the commodity that is being sold here, in addition to the changes in human sexual encounters wrought by the advent of advancing technology. Haraway (1998) has suggested that the BwO/cyborg is a product of fears and desires that run deep within our cultural imaginary. Indeed, as I have mentioned earlier, phone/cyber sex offers an escape from the physical and cultural confines of the body and the fear evoked by threats such as AIDS and STIs, the complications of ‘embodied’ sexual relationships, the fear of physical inadequacies brought on by a culture obsessed with body image ((Springer 1998; Williams 1998; Flowers 1998). Thus, what results is the disappearance of the ‘natural body’ to be replaced by technological simulacrum (Balsamo 1996). Bodies become a collection of images, objects, language, sign vehicles for fetishistic commodities. They are simultaneously discursive and material, a matter of fiction and of lived experience.

Phone sex like virtual sex may not involve the joining of physical bodies, but it does nonetheless involve the sharing of sexual intimacy through the construction of ‘fantasy bodies’ and characters. It presents a new form of sexual intimacy and pleasure, and indeed redefines the boundaries of sex work. The fact that body fluids are not exchanged or that physical bodies never meet, has propelled many callers to assert that they what they are doing is not ‘cheating’ on their wives or partners. The notion of (in)fidelity for callers is a key component in how they perceive the phone sex market and its services, whether they consider themselves patrons of prostitution or users of adult entertainment. Turkle (1995) considers the issue of fidelity and virtual sex in her study of people’s experiences of virtual environments. She (1995) raises the questions, is infidelity the physical action or the feeling of emotional intimacy with someone other than the primary partner? Is it the desire or the action? Is it in the head or in the body? These and similar questions have been applied to phone sex in an attempt to define its status in the sex work industry (Shopland 1995; O’Toole 1998; Williams 1989), and to gain a better understanding of ‘sexual intimacy’.
Clearly then, the production and consumption of sexual services in the sex industry is wide and varied, with each sex market providing a plethora of outlets for the erotic appetite. Phone sex itself opens up the realm of possibilities for the expression of desire outside the bounds of physical limitations. The fantasies that are created in phone sex can range from the standard scripts and images that are found in the world of pornography to the intimate secrets or fetishes drawn from childhood experience of an individual. Thus, what we understand to be the product/commodity in the phone sex transaction varies according not only to the ideas, desires and needs of the caller, but also the understanding of the operator and the context in which she works.

Managing Identities

The ambiguity of phone sex work raises a number of dilemmas for operators to perform identity work. Since this kind of work is based both in fiction and reality, one could say therefore, that operators are able to hide behind their ‘fantasy girl’ characters as a means to separate their work and private self. Indeed it could be argued that since phone sex work does not involve the touching or meeting of ‘physical bodies’ then operators are not at risk from the effects of ‘full sex work’, and less likely to need to invest in identity work. However, as evidence so far suggests, phone sex opens up a realm of possibilities for sexual intimacy unhindered by physical constraints (Flowers, 1998; Jewell Rich & Guidroz, 2000). The virtual fantasy body is able to transgress moral, cultural, social, physical boundaries in pursuit of pleasure (King, 1996; McRae, 1997; Stone, 1995; Turkle, 1995; Williams, 1998). Generally for callers the attraction of the service lies in their ability to momentarily flee the difficulties and realities of life, and allow for the self-indulgence to explore their desires. Thus, the phone sex operator finds that she spends a great deal of her time acting out the stereotypes of female sexuality, cultural attractiveness and so forth, which are often a far cry from her actual ‘physical’ and ‘real’ self. Indeed the phone sex operator spends a great deal of time acting out the stereotypes of female sexuality that most women in modern society learn to resist. In addition, she must also live with the stigma attached to the sex industry, which means that operators seldom divulge the true nature of their work to friends and family.

‘Physical’ sex workers and phone sex operators are required to separate and commodify their own sexuality in order to be the embodiment of the client’s fantasy ideal. The character that is constructed will inevitably incorporate the core interests and basic nature of the sex worker. Thus, argues Flowers, phone sex operators “promise to be what they sell and they sell what they are” (Flowers 1998:89). The essential problem for sex workers is how to adjust one’s self to the role or work identity in such
a way that will prove to be least stressful and less likely to consume their own sense of self. As I have discussed in previous chapters, ‘full’ or ‘physical’ sex workers have developed various techniques to enable them to make some separation from their work. Since sex workers must separate and objectify their own sexuality in order to be the ‘embodiment’ of a pornographic ideal, they must learn to sell intimacy and sexuality as a commodity. Thus, they develop certain strategies that will enable them to lock their work into a specific and tightly bounded place in their identities and have their real selves located outside of work and removed from the encounters with clients. They do this through assigning meaning to their work, the performance of ‘work’ rituals, the erection of barriers, the geographical and physical location of work and so forth (Brewis & Linstead 2000).

For phone sex operators, where entities are linked, such as the operator and her character(s), separation between the two often becomes problematic, while at the same time an operator’s ability to separate her working persona or character from the ‘real self’ is critical to her identity work (Flowers 1998). Though the distinction between personal identity and character may seem artificial when juxtaposed with the intimate nature of the work and the connection between character and self, such a distinction is necessary for some separation from work to be achieved. The operator’s ability to construct a work identity can also serve to distance or protect her from insult caused by the caller’s usurious sexuality, or disturbing or ‘morally problematic’ fantasies and the operator’s own callousness towards callers (Flowers 1998; Jewel & Guidroz 2000). Phone sex operators have argued that their work entails more than just the repetition of pornographic scripts. Indeed as this discussion has revealed, operators have found that the work involves an investment of themselves into the characters that they create, and as such, face the threat of losing themselves in the characters that they have created.

When ‘deep gestures of exchange’ enter into the labour market and are bought and sold as an aspect of labour power, which is the case in sex work, then these feelings are considered commoditised (Hochschild 1979). Thus, the operator is faced with managing the estrangement of feelings for commercial use and also copes with the threat of alienation that accompanies the sale of the self. Under these circumstances, Hochschild (1983) argues that emotional labour is undertaken by the individual to rationalise her involvement in this form of work and involves varied stances that revolve around the distinction between the operator’s sense of self and her working identity. “The essential problem is how to adjust one’s self to the role in a way that allows some flow of self into the role but minimises the stress the role puts on the self” (Hochschild 1983:188). Thus, what Hochschild (1983) suggests, extends Goffman’s (1959), concept of impression management, where his actors manage outer impressions
and do not actively manage inner feelings, and proposes that operators perform ‘deep acting’ “[A]n acting that goes well beyond the mere ordering of display”, undertaken by individuals whose job it is to make and sustain meanings (1979:563). The idea here is to make the commoditisation of feelings and person more palatable through what Leidner (1993) states as the ‘reliable’ production of good feelings without greatly interfering with efficiency or quality of work.

“I would feel violated if they knew my real name, if they used my real name I’d feel raped, because I keep my private life separate from this. I am Anya on the phone, I’m Anya, and she is a different girl. Of course the real me, that’s going to come through if sometimes, I mean, you can’t help that, but Anya smiles and chats, moans and groans - you know all that - and even if I feel like shit, you know, had an emotional day, and this guy wants to talk about and do stuff you want to scream at him for - you can do it”

(Anya)

Although the effects of service work will inevitably vary according to the job, Leidner suggests that all sorts of service workers face tensions resulting from the discrepancy between how they deal with people in their everyday interactions and how they are required to deal with them by the routines of work. This raises the issue of identity and authenticity that I mentioned earlier. One such problem for phone sex operators is the necessity of disguising some feelings and simulating others. Whether workers experience the discrepancy between their authentic feelings and the feelings that they need to express as part of their job is, to some extent according to Leidner (1993), culturally variable. Hochschild (1983) argues that contemporary Americans are unusually concerned with authenticity, whereby ‘phoniness’ is considered a serious failing in the U.S., and jobs that require the manipulation of one’s own and others’ feelings may raise painful questions of identity for workers. In Flowers’ study of U.S. phone sex, operators dealt with this issue of insincerity and authenticity by exhibiting a cost-benefit analysis, citing that lying well is a requirement for doing their jobs well. However, Flowers states that lying well also became second nature to operators in their private lives, since through their work they begin to see the convenience of small lies and begin to use them in non-work-related situations (1998:49). In spite of the seemingly negative consequences of adopting insincerity, the operators in my study described an increasing self knowledge and self-assurance when they considered the insincerity and issues of integrity as a result of faking friendliness, sexiness and so forth at work.
"I'm not hurting anyone and it's not like I'm lying. I feel that what we're doing is being creative and I don't intend to manipulate anyone in any bad way, and I'm lying in as far as I'm telling them that I'm 18 and cute - it works both ways - the client doesn't want to hear what I really look like or what I really do during the day. So, what I do is help him to be who he wants and be with who he wants for that half hour or what ever it is"  
(Caroline)

Anya also perceives what she is doing as less insincere and more genuine:

"I give them my warmth as a person and my caring, and I get a lot of guys who have never been with a woman before and I can be really - I feel that I can give them a positive experience and I can encourage them and not put them down and make them - and not make them feel weird for ringing up. So I use a bit of myself in the real stuff like that, when it's not sexual"  
(Anya)

However, that is not to say that the operators do not feel some discrepancy in terms of identity and authenticity, but as Flowers (1998) has stated, the cost-benefit analysis process allows operators to rationalise insincerity as being part and parcel of the job they are doing. The emotional work that is undertaken is less likely to be experienced as part of the self and more likely to be experienced as part of the job and indeed the character (Hochschild 1979).

Sex workers will often try to find a defining feature of their work in order to distance it from other forms of sex work that they consider to represent the 'seedier side' of sex work or that can be representative of the common notion of prostitution. In a sense they attempt to polarise sex work into what they do as 'professional', a job and the other forms of sex work as 'prostitution', unskilled work. Private escort workers, for example, consider themselves to be independent and professional women, and consider women working in massage parlours or on the street etc. as fulfilling the stereotypical image of the 'prostitute. They are visible or constrained by work place policy and practice.

I found the same type of distinctions being made between women who worked in massage parlours that offered 'full sex' and those that offered 'hand relief' or masturbation only. Bryant and Palmer’s (1975) study of massage parlours in the U.S.
found that because they were rendering a sexual service, the masseuses in parlours who offered masturbation only were concerned with being labelled as prostitutes. In an attempt to neutralise their image of their work and also to rationalise their work to themselves as well as to others, they attempted to make a definite distinction between ‘whore’ and ‘hand whore’. “To the masseuses, prostituting their hand is presumably not as seriously objectionable as prostituting the rest of their body” ((Bryant & Palmer, 1975)). Thus anatomical compartmentalisation facilitated rationalisation and the process of reconciling economic motives and rewards, self image, and occupational circumstances, becomes more manageable. The women who work in the Christchurch establishments tend to emphasise the massage service they provide and the fact that they receive some informal training, when distancing themselves from ‘full’ sex workers and the label of prostitute.

Phone sex operators variously speak of providing different services for clients compared to other sex markets and cited concrete differences between language and action. Action was seen to constitute ‘full’ sex work and essentially the true meaning of prostitution. It was considered to be separate, distinct, unrelated, unconnected and dissimilar to what how they saw their work. All the operators I spoke to with the exception of Ruby who herself has been and continues to be a ‘full’ sex worker, placed different values upon the different sex markets. This enabled them to locate their work as more legitimate and less stigmatised, and thus avoid the label prostitute.

“It doesn’t really worry me what I do because I’m not seeing them, I’m not touching them and to me they’re just a voice on the other end of the phone that is getting off on me, and I don’t have to feel bad about myself”
(Monique)

Phone sex operators often make distinctions between ‘physical’ and non-physical’ sex work (Guidroz & Jewel 2000).

“I’m realistic and I know that this is part of the sex industry, but I’m not a prostitute. I don’t use my body, I just help them to get off, it’s my main function to get them off and get paid for it”
(Honey)

In addition, operators often cite aspects of their work which can rationalise their involvement and further distance them from ‘prostitution.
"To me I think what we're doing a lot of the time is counselling. I mean, where can a guy turn around and tell his secrets to without the fear of being jibed or poked fun at. At least doing it over the phone he is not hurting anybody - we're giving them the opportunity to vent out how they feel and their fetishes over the phone without the fear of being judged or pointed at"
(Monique)

Phoenix (2000), has suggested that discursive strategies have always tended to be used by sex workers as a means to make sense of the work they do. "The anomalies and contradictions of their lives are resolved and rendered in a fashion that permits such involvement to be plausible" ((Phoenix, 2000)). Thus, sex workers choose to construct a work identity that is based upon discourse that presents sex workers as, commodified bodies, workers, businesswomen, health educators, victims, survivors and so forth. Similarly, phone sex operators will use such discursive strategies, adding, actress/entertainer and counsellors/therapists to the list.

"I can be a school girl one call, a naughty neighbour or nurse in the next - you see - you've got to be a bloody good actress in this line of work to get them to believe, to get off on the fantasy stuff. It's not like you can just lie there and open your legs you know, you've got to know the little tricks to get it all to come together and work right".
(Sandy)

Operators would also emphasise professionalism in their work. Anya stresses that the work is not mindless:

It's a lot harder than you'd think, it's more than moaning and groaning on the phone. You've got to learn to listen as well as talk and I don't think a lot of people can't actually do that properly today - listen to someone - it can be emotionally draining having to be convincing and keeping the conversation going and keeping them interested"
(Anya)

In addition, operators will also point out the economic benefits, flexibility and control they enjoy from this form of work.

"I've always treated it as a bit of humour and there's a lot of people out there who want this service and want to talk, it's extra money. I get
to work from home and call the shots, it's my business and I must admit, it is a bit wearing and you can feel drained at the end of the day like any work, but you feel like you've earned that money."

(Caroline)

Thus, operators attempt to maintain self esteem and construct a work identity by distancing themselves from the “socially undesirable hands-on” form of sex work by embracing the “desirable” goal of supplementing or deriving an income from a job that allows flexibility, anonymity and control over their work. The establishment of boundaries is a means by which sex workers attempt to make a separation between work and personal identities. Boundaries are also used by operators to give their work some form of structure, though often these attempts are thwarted by the ambiguous nature of phone sex work. In addition, ‘time’ is used as a means to control encounters and establish a framework in which to work.

**Negotiating Boundaries**

For a ‘full’ sex worker separating work sex from pleasure sex is a key issue in the management of her work identity and can be undertaken through various strategies such as, assigning certain sexual positions/services for personal pleasure. The use of condoms is used by some sex workers to delineate between work sex and pleasure/personal sex (Barnard & McKeganey 1996; Phoenix 2000; Day 1996). Phone sex operators, like other sex workers, are often faced with the problem of how to establish or manage intimate or personal relationships outside work, to make the separation between their work and ‘real’ self. This separation as I discussed in the previous section is achieved through the process of emotion management/work. However, there are some practical boundaries, strategies that operators set in place as part of their work practice.

*I'm a married woman and I'm not interested in anybody else and so I can easily just look at it just as a business and that's all."

(Anya)

Sex workers strive to avoid personal taste from interfering in their selection or rejection of clients. Desiree, the subject in O’Connell Davidson’s study of escort prostitution, saw the selection of clients based upon any particular attraction or repulsion for them as ‘unprofessional’. This approach to her work, allowed her to make a good living from sex work, and was nevertheless a means by which Desiree was able to ensure that she did not feel herself to be merely indulging a personal taste for anonymous sexual
activity/encounters involving the exchange of money (O’Connell Davidson 1995; 1998). In a similar vein, a phone sex operator cannot accept only those callers that she finds inspirational or exciting or sexy. She has to sell intimacy and sexuality, and does this by duplicating desire, often to the point of monotony (Flowers 1998; Rich & Guidroz 2000). Her services are therefore offered more or less mechanically, often to callers that she finds uninspiring, unattractive or repulsive.

“I’m so distant from it sometimes, it’s like, it’s hard to explain - I know that they’re on the end of the phone, but I can’t really relate to what they’re doing. I switch off an I’m ‘sandy’ and all these words just come out of my mouth - I just can’t picture it - to me they’re a fantasy because they’re not really there even though they are and I’m talking to them, even when I don’t really want to - I can easily tell myself that they’re not”
(Sandy)

Sex workers strive to leave their ‘jobs’ at the office’ through various strategies to separate work from their personal lives. Independent operators however, tend to have undefined boundaries in terms of personal and work lives. Since work is undertaken at home and the nature of phone sex is such that operators can experience a considerable amount of ‘down time’ in terms of actual calls, operators are able to go about their everyday lives in between calls. Operators are unable to predict when they are going to receive a call and thus, and often find that they can be interrupted whilst undertaking everyday tasks/chores.

“I used to prefer not to be seen as a real person because then they say - ‘what do you do, what do you do in real life?’ - and I’d rather just be seen as a fantasy figure sometimes, as it’s a lot easier than to be the real person”
(Anya)

It is important for operators to establish boundaries for their service, what they will or will not do, what they will talk about and what they won’t. This will allow them to make the separation between their work self and what I call the ‘real’ self. These boundaries will invariably differ between operators in terms of the content of their fantasies and how they relate to the caller, however having said this, the general approach of operators to actual physical contact with clients is that the fantasy is best left unembodied for indeed the ‘real’ contact would be disappointing if not dangerous
 Operators will limit call content and interaction to their own ‘comfort zone’.

“I do try and set some limits and will say to the callers that I talk about just about everything and they will usually ask me what I don’t talk about and I’ll tell them - no children and animals - I’m not entirely comfortable with everything, there’s other stuff and I will just skirt around it, but what usually happens is that they are usually into something and will ask if you are and so that gives you the option to say no I’m not”

(Honey)

Operators must make their own decisions in terms of ethical/moral limits of the fantasy and these again will differ between operators.

“The school girl fantasy is very very common, and there is a fine line, and as I say, you have to live by your own morals. So, you’ve got to be able to sleep at night, and so you only go as far as you want to go, and if they don’t like it then they won’t ring back”

(Ruby)

“I generally don’t keep talking to the ones that have wanted to talk about children. I’ll terminate the conversation, and I think it’s the same for most of the ladies working because most of us have got or had children and some have been molested as children and it’s sickening…”

(Caroline)

In phone sex, there are no physical boundaries for the bodies that are created, and often operators can find the fantasy being pushed to the limit so to speak. Even where the operators have established a set of limits to their service, they may find themselves inadvertently crossing over into an area of sexual activity they may find difficult to come to terms with, or that violates their own moral/ethical ideas. Ruby and Monique found themselves in this situation from two very different fantasies/scenarios.

“I think there is only one thing that upset me on a call and that was when this one guy - he wanted a child, a 12 year old - and that was ok, except for half way through the call, after about 10 or 15 minutes had gone passed and all of a sudden I heard in the background - ”daddy” -
from a little girl, a little girl’s voice in the background, and that just upset me - that he was fantasizing about children and there are children in the house - it just blew me away”

(Monique)

“One particular gentleman wanted me torture his wife, and I mean really torture his wife. When I got off the phone one day - and I was really surprised myself to think that I could think of those things to do, you know - he really wanted me to torture her, and the fantasy is that he sits there and watches me torture her - stuff like sowing up the lips of her pussy together with paper clips, pushing it through the flesh and that sort of thing - like the guy is no threat - I’ve been dealing with him for years, but I was just surprised at myself - that I could think of these things”

(Ruby)

“I have to not judge these guys, you can’t judge somebody by just a fantasy phone call. I mean, the whole idea is to let out your most inner fantasies or desires, but that doesn’t mean that you go out there doing it - doing what you talk about - and you have to look at it like that otherwise how can you do the job?”

(Sandy)

The detrimental effects of service work, like phone sex, according to Leidner, can result in “cynicism and defensiveness that affects people’s understanding of social relations including their sense of power, their expectations of other people, and their beliefs about their obligations to others” (1993:230). Indeed, sex workers have often claimed their work has had detrimental effects for their character, claiming to view all men as potential clients for example, and develop a general mistrust of men. Phone sex operators are no exception to this and have claimed to develop a very different perspective on ‘guys’ and also a new perspective on self. The more the work encroached on their personal lives, the more important the distinctions between work life and personal life seems to be.

However, with the increased openness and experimentation of sexuality in the phone sex service some operators notice a loosening up of their own sexual inhibitions, language and humour in their private lives. Indeed, one of the effects of speaking about things that one may find repugnant is that they tend to lose their power and become less so, and thus, operators experience more of a tolerance for the fantasy acts than when
they are done in real life. These same acts could have been viewed as disgusting prior to the phone sex experience. Some operators state that they enjoyed certain calls and one or two confessed to occasionally ‘getting off’ or extremely aroused during a call. The increased openness that operators experienced can be seen to be both an asset and a problem, in that they are able to participate in wide variety of sexual fantasy and vocabulary. However this could also result in blurred boundaries between their on-line morality and their private one.

“They can get aroused by some of the calls, it turns me on in a way knowing that - you know - that I'm arousing somebody with just my voice and with the fantasy, and my husband will get lucky then, but if I'm talking to a person who is into water sports or the brown owl, then I have no, well, I don't get turned on, and he (husband) knows that if it's a child call where the person wants me to be a certain age, or the anal sex or water sports calls then he knows that there is no way that I'm going to open my legs to him later - he'll just get his hand smacked”
(Monique)

Caroline found that work could quite easily cross over into her private life:

“After doing this job, then sex takes on a whole different aspect, you look at every guy and wonder if he’s rung me up in the past. Sometimes you'll get somebody’s name that you know or voice. I had one of my ex bosses ring me up for a call and I knew his voice before he even gave his name on the credit card, so I got somebody else to do the call - I couldn’t have done it”
(Caroline)

The management of time in phone sex is precise and clear. Operators work to segments of time for which there is a set fee, for example, 0900 operators have a fixed price they charge per minute, some operators will work by 10 minute segments and some like Caroline will use half hour time segments. Operators are aware of the ‘real’ time in which they are working, and will endeavour to bring the client to climax during that time segment (if that is the purpose of the call). They must however, be careful not to alert the client to this mercenary approach during the call and run the risk of destroying the fantasy. Operators find that they develop some sort of rhythm to their interaction, allowing a certain amount of time for pleasantries and negotiating the type of fantasy the client has in mind.
"I always have a clock near, and I know that it makes it fairly cold, but I mean you still try to be very warm and assuring with them and romantic but still be able to watch the clock and know that you have got so long to do the introductions and the you have got a certain amount of time, and then - so it gets to 2 minutes to go and so you are getting right into it and then try to make them cum"
(Monique)

Calls do not always work to plan, some callers may try to make the call last longer, or may not simply be able to reach orgasm for instance. Thus, operators implement strategies for terminating the call when the ‘paid time’ has concluded.

"There are lots of little tricks that you can pull - like you can knock on the wall and say that someone is here and you’ve got to go when they are going over their time - or sometimes with some of them you say that you’ve got to phone back the boss after 10 minutes otherwise you get charged with the cost for the extra time on the phone, you know, generally get them on your side and it works better"
(Ruby)

Conclusion

"What I’m doing here is no different to what I do when I’m escorting or doing B&D - ok so I’m not having sex with the client ‘physically’ (emphasis), but I am providing a sexual service - I am bringing the client to orgasm. In B&D I don’t have sex with the client either, and yet everyone associates it with the sex industry. I’m acting and it’s the closest thing to it (acting), and it isn’t what I’m doing as an escort too? I’m providing the client with a fantasy, be it on the phone or in person. I consider myself a sex worker, what I do is sex work, whether I’m on the phone, in the dungeon or in a bedroom - it’s all sex work"
(Ruby)

In a society that is obsessed with the regulation of our physical bodies through legislation, technological intervention and so forth, virtual/phone/cyber sex presents the individual with the means to freely express sexual desire, explore fantasy, disembodied intimacy and fetish with little possibility of exposure or rejection. The lure of phone
sex fantasy does not lie in the hope that the fantasy girl will come alive, but rather it relies in the serenity of the caller’s knowledge that she will not. If she were to come to life, then with her would come the ambiguity, danger and difficulties of a real relationship. Thus, the fantasy girl is desirable only as long as she remains abstract (Flowers 1998). And we could say then, that the fantasy comes to supersede or replace physicality as the real hub of erotic pleasure, the idea or the possibility of transgressing socio-physical boundaries, matters perhaps more than engaging in the actual physical practices themselves (Brewis & Linstead 2000). Whatever the motivations for callers to demand this service, phone sex has become an increasingly lucrative business through advances in telecommunications and of course the relative poverty of women.

Phone sex highlights the ambiguity of sex work and makes us question our ideas/definitions of sex work/prostitution, and indeed the concept of sexual intimacy. It is both real and fictitious embodied and disembodied, invisible and yet highly visible through advertisements and popular media depictions. Phone sex is ambiguous sex; it involves real bodies that never meet, and fictional bodies created from a collection of actors, objects, meanings, experiences and images, such as the caller, the telephone, the telecommunications company, stiletto shoes, ‘G’ strings, pornographic/media images/representations of women, the operator and so forth. The encounter is based upon shared assumptions of sexual intimacy, a mixture of improvisation and scripts which the operator and caller negotiate. The service is not illegal and yet the securing of monies in exchange for the service is problematic for the operator, resulting in the practice of quasi-legal methods for money collection (the phone gambling account, using assumed names/purposes for credit card systems and 0900 services).

The ambiguity of the market has its advantages for the operator, allowing for the freedom to negotiate and structure a service which best suits the supply and demand of the market. It also enables callers and operators to maintain their anonymity/invisibility without the fear of prosecution for ‘prostitution activities’. The operators can be the blue-eyed, blondes and redheads that the clients desire ready and willing to please and be pleased. The service may be open ended, but the boundaries that the operators set can be clear cut ‘no bestiality’ or ‘physical meeting’. The operator uses ‘time’ to define the service, she works to time segments and set fees for those segments. She works within both ‘real’ time and fantasy time, which she is in control of.

However, ambiguity surrounding the phone sex service can also work against the operator in terms of identity work. The absence of legislation leaves this market open to many interpretations in terms of defining/identifying it, as ‘legitimate’ work. Operators find themselves having to negotiate informal policies and frameworks with
Peripheral actors such as Telecom New Zealand, metropolitan newspapers and so forth. Though phone sex is not defined in law as prostitution per se, it is nonetheless associated with pornography and sex work and as such becomes a stigmatised occupation. Thus, operators find that they are unable to disclose their work to friends and family and have developed techniques/stories to conceal the nature of their work. They therefore, lie or manufacture ‘truth’ at work and at home. This ambiguity is not specific only to phone sex, but to sex work in general. Throughout the sex industry women must manufacture ‘truth’ inside and outside the client encounter. The phone sex operator takes this one step further by constructing her fictional body.
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Conclusion

Claudia's account of her work was used at the beginning of the thesis as a means to open-up the diverse sex markets operating in New Zealand and thereby introduce the everyday world of sex work. Claudia's story reflects upon the different ways in which massage parlour and escort services are organised and we follow her as she recounts her experience of negotiating relations with actors and groups of actors that cut across these markets. The focus of her account is on selling sexual services and the organisation of different payment systems, and how this differs between markets. Thus, she draws our attention to the process of sex work and the tensions over the different meanings and understandings of the actors and groups of actors involved in the sex work industry. For example, she recalls the struggle between sex workers and management over notions of work and professionalism within the context of the massage parlour and introduces us to the disciplinary strategy of fining that operates in massage parlours. In this way, Claudia presents us with the view of the sale of sexual services as a process involving a struggle over what constitutes work, thus drawing our attention away from the traditional focus of power/control in the worker/client encounter or within the relationship between the worker and the state. She introduces the notion of resistance, and challenges a common preconception about what happens in sex businesses, suggesting that sex workers are by no means simply the passive recipients of things that are done to them, nor are they simply controlled by management. Sex workers are both organise their won work and actively resist encroachments upon their control.

The thesis focused upon the three sex markets, massage parlour, private escort and phone sex, as a means to present the diversity of the sex work industry within a particular locale, Christchurch. It is the off-street less visible form of sex work market that contained the greater number of sex workers, and as the study has revealed, indoor sex businesses and venues are characteristic of the sex work industry in New Zealand.

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1 This is further explored from the perspective of massage parlour management in chapter four.
Even though the majority of the massage parlours in New Zealand are visually identifiable by their street signage or the area of the city in which they are located, the visible manifestation of what constitutes sex work remains hidden from public view. Similarly, both the private escort and phone sex markets are organised around key issues of invisibility or discretion. Private escorts like Naomi and Claudia for example, claim the level of professionalism of workers in the sex industry is dependent upon how a worker manages her (in)visibility. This invisibility is made possible through the ambiguity of prostitution legislation and informal policing/regulatory arrangements.

The key to understanding the organisation of sex markets/businesses and sex work practice is not simply documenting the differences in approaches to controlling or containing sex work markets, but, rather to account for diversity and change of sex markets within particular locales (West & Austrin, 2002: 499). My study has highlighted the complexity and diversity of sex work markets, businesses and sex work practice through a focus on the 'local'. This focus on how local arrangements are produced, the relations between individual actors and groups of actors on different levels involved following how discipline, autonomy and ambiguity are played out across sex markets. In this way the recurring patterns of conflict and cooperation between actors and/or groups of actors in the organisation of sex work markets and sex work practice are highlighted, revealing quite different business arrangements and informal regulatory arrangements to those normally found in more conventional accounts of sex work.

This emphasis on the social organisation of sex work within a locale disrupts more conventional accounts of sex work that tends to focus on embodied performance and client encounters. This disruption occurs not only because sex work is organised in different business arrangements but sex workers themselves are also mobile across these arrangements. In this way, this study allows us to understand some of the difficulties associated with the operation of quasi-legal markets in sexual services and by implication, with the operation of decriminalised markets. Thus, as Brewis and Linstead (2000a) suggest, the fragmented and complex nature of the sex markets highlight the importance of 'placing' and spatially located materialities in the shaping of sex work practice.

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2 The majority of massage parlours in Christchurch are located within the 'four avenues' area of the city.
In order to do this, I reframed the conventional dyadic study of the client sex worker encounter/transaction and the issue of power within this relationship, as a study on how the everyday world of sex work was produced through diverse networks. Like Flowers (1998a), Hastrup (1995) and Kondo (1990) before me, I chose to participate and work in my research field. Flowers (1998a), for example, positioned herself as both worker and researcher in the phone sex market, enabling her to gain access to informal networks and understandings of the organisation of sex work and sex work practice not normally accessible through interviews alone. The advantages that Flowers was able to enjoy were derived from her embodied presence. Similarly, my hybrid status as a worker/researcher in a massage parlour enabled me to document relations that had not been documented by other researchers in the sex industry. Through the multiple positionings of manager/receptionist, interviewer, academic researcher, participant at meetings of the NZPC, friend, colleague, I was able to assemble connections that made this account of sex work possible. These connections operated as resources for face to face interviewing of sex workers and representatives of organisations, businesses and groups.

My own participation in the field enabled me to draw on my own experiences and positioning as a manager of a massage parlour, to reflect on how I and others constructed this everyday world of sex work. As a manager, I was positioned to understand the parlour as a business, to co-ordinate the work of a parlour and present it to clients and the police in such a way that it ran as a 'normal' business. As a manager, I was fixed in place by my work and mediated between the actors that made up the field. I mobilised and was mobilised by the same connections and networks as the sex workers themselves. In this way, participant observation allowed me to see and be part of how sex work is mediated by others outside the client encounter. As a manager or service worker I had access to and participated in, the negotiated performances in both the front and back stages of the industry (Goffman, 1990). I had access to both the locales of work and the flows of sex workers' conversations that sustained them and contributed to their construction and understandings of work (down time). Thus, I was able to overhear, observe and participate in multiple conversations about sex work. In this way, my role as both researcher and informant allowed me to view and experience the sale of sexual services as a process involving a struggle over what constitutes 'work', enabling an understanding how the industry 'worked'.
My use of 'time' as a central focus for discussion in the massage parlour chapter was made possible by my presence and participation, allowed me to unravel the complex relations that characterise the ways in which sex work is negotiated in massage parlours. I documented the way in which management attempts to discipline workers' time through enforcement of timetables/schedules, and the construction of a system of control of time segments in which time and not sex is sold. The uncertainty of the organisational environment of the massage parlour, facilitated through ambiguous legislation, encouraged the discretionary implementation of the law by the police and the practice of informal regulatory arrangements by management. Parlour management sought to buffer or absorb this uncertainty - made more difficult by the transitory nature and non-status of sex workers - through 'efficient' scheduling as a means to standardise the organisation of sex work and sex work practice. Thus, temporal structuring is seen as a way in which to manage uncertainty and control sex workers (see Adam, 1995; Hassard, 2000).

Though massage parlour management will often talk about their businesses as 'normal', it is difficult to view a massage parlour as 'just a normal business', not simply because of the sexual services that are available for purchase, but because of the precarious legal status that they occupy. Massage parlours are unable to formally 'employ' or contract sex workers nor can they openly advertise their sexual services. Thus, unable to recognise the job and service of sex workers through conventional work methods and processes, management has no 'normal' bureaucratic means of overt control over sex workers. The ordering of time in the massage parlour therefore becomes a way in which management attempts to establish some stability to work practice/organisation. Like any other place of work, the temporal structure of work then becomes a site for conflict between management and workers. Here lies the peculiarity of the massage parlour as a business or institution in the way in which management devises ways to extract commitment and work from the workers through a system of fining and bonding them. These disciplinary practices are combined with market practices of the 'sale' of all-inclusive services, which link the workers' money to the time segment and the client-centred approaches to selling sexual services as a means to encourage competition and, therefore, self-discipline and self-regulation by workers.

Collinson (1992) suggests in his study of an engineering factory, that workers' overt resistance to management can be seen more in terms of workers actively "managing management" (:49-72) and not simply just "managing to resist" (:127-49). In a similar
vein, Ackroyd and Thompson (1999) talk about workers' resistance or what they term as 'misbehaviour' as being related to processes of self-organisation whereby workers attempt to form 'self-interest' and self-identity that is in contradistinction to those imposed by formal hierarchies (:70-73). In this way, self-organisation is typically shaped by and can be seen to be a response to the structures of the formal organisation in which it is contained. However, rather than viewing this 'misbehaviour' or form of self-organisation by sex workers in the massage parlour as mere recalcitrance, it can be understood as a process of actively constructing self identity through the development of autonomous activities. This is illustrated in the conflict with management over the management or construction of temporalities in the massage parlour. In this way, sex workers can be seen as actively managing/constructing their own time/identities/performances. Furthermore, such self-organisation by workers within managerially defined frameworks can be shaped, reshaped and reorganised by workers in response to new management contingencies and initiatives. In addition, since the self-organisation/misbehaviour of workers is in reaction to formal hierarchies, often the incorporation of workers' 'misbehaviour' into workplace practice as a means to stabilise and organise work and workers can back-fire on management (see Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999). This can be seen in the case of the new manager of Studio 14B and his attempts to incorporate workers' strategies of self-organisation - flexibility and free market approaches to organising sex work - into his management policies in an attempt to combat absenteeism, poor punctuality and general dissent. This attempt to turn resistance into compliance failed. Workers developed new forms of self-organisation and resistance, and the manager was impelled through frustration, to return once again to disciplining and organising workers around a system of rosters schedules, fining and bonding.

It has been argued that contemporary forms of management and organisation that seek to stringently streamline or choreograph work practice, are involved in a process of squeezing out of informal controls and eliminating workers' 'free space' in which they can practice autonomy based activities (see Collinson 1992). Massage parlour managers like Sarah at Francesca's, Barbie at Studio 14B or Bev at Dior's are seen to share this objective through their use of strict workplace policies linking sex work practice to 'parlour time'. These massage parlours incorporated a regime of rosters, schedules, all-inclusives, 'coffee clubbing', and personalised servicing, using disciplinary strategies such as fining, exclusion, and bonding to ensure compliance. In response to management's attempts to enforce such bureaucratic system of organisation - which is at
variance to the freelancing approach favoured by sex workers in which work is defined by the number of 'jobs' a worker has done - workers often resort to disrupting the organisation of parlour time. This is played out through absenteeism, poor punctuality, walking off a shift, cutting room time or working to service rather than time segment (particularly in the case of an all-inclusive). A solution to such workplace conflict is offered by Tilly and Tilly (1998) who argue that employers and workers who invariably have conflicting objectives in terms of the organisation of work practice will undertake what they refer to as a form of bargaining, exchanging rewards, threats, punishments or promises contingent on agreements regarding work performance. In the massage parlour I noted how fines and bonding are in practice supplemented with patterns of indulgency as a means to get work done (see Tilly & Tilly 1998). Although this bargaining is generally effective when negotiated as an 'individual contract' it is often short-lived as the indulgency becomes formalised into workplace practice/organisation.

The pursuit of autonomy is key to the self-organisation activities or 'misbehaviour' of workers (Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999). Even in the most disciplined work environment, Hassard (2000) comments that workers will circumvent or improvise upon work practice in subtle ways through what he refers to as 'self-paced' production or self-organisation. This is no different in the context of the massage parlour, particularly where the status of the work force (the sex workers) is legally ambiguous. Here I documented the way in which massage parlour workers develop strategies, techniques and tacit skills for their management of the client encounter. Through the management of their own performances and work pace in 'room time', sex workers are effectively self-organising, they are claiming autonomy over their work. In other words, the control or management of room time is fundamental to the construction of the sex worker identity that enables sex workers to give meaning to their work.

My discussion of private escort work presented the ways in which notions of autonomy associated with self-employment were used by private escorts to craft a working identity and particular work practices. The discourse used by private escorts is one of independence, choice and flexibility, in particular, the freedom to be 'your own boss'. In this way, escorts talked about the ability to reap the benefits of their own efforts or labour. O'Connell Davidson (1994) asserts that such ideas are key for the sex worker in the construction of her world of work. For Salmi (1997), the importance of autonomy for a self-employed service worker, is not so much the independence of the work itself, but rather the flexibility in putting together the different aspects of everyday life and the
ability to cope and arrange different time patterns. In the literature of self-employment, this form of autonomy is inscribed in self-employment (see Rainbird, 1991; Salmi 1997).

The autonomy claimed by private escorts differs to the autonomy that massage parlour workers claimed over their own work practice. For example, as indicated earlier, in the massage parlour, the intervention of a third party in the organisation of sex services removes a great deal of the flexibility and independence of self-employed sex workers. Sex work in this context is organised around processes of conflict and compromise over the construction and control of time. Thus, for massage parlour workers, autonomy at work tends to be located in their ability to self-organise individually and collectively around their individual work rhythms and strategies/mechanisms of control within 'room time'.

In contrast, key to the notion of self-employment/autonomy for private escorts is the notion that they are free from the intervention of third party disciplinary controls in the organisation of their work. As self-employed workers, they claim to exert control over their time, money, services workplace and visibility, operating discreetly (invisibly) from private residences. This notion of self-employment is labeled a myth by Allen and Wolkowitz (1987), who contend that all labour processes for profit entail some system of control or management. Likewise, Felstead and Jewson (2000) argue that such 'free spirit' portrayals of self-employment omit the daily conflicts that self-employed workers must negotiate in order to exert or maintain control over their work. In this way, workers engage in a process of struggle and resistance with labour market and social constraints and limitations. They must establish and maintain an interface with external bodies and/or organisations in order to secure the operation of their businesses. Therefore, for private escorts, this 'autonomy' or freedom is predicated on negotiating relations with diverse actors or groups of actors to secure their ability to operate 'discreetly' from the suburbs.

In addition, like self-employed service workers, escorts must negotiate the fluctuations in market demand and competition. Unlike massage parlour workers, private escorts are required to exercise a greater degree of self-management in their everyday lives and work routines with the responsibility to invent and sustain a work ethic, that will enable them to drive, motivate and police themselves. Thus, they find themselves routinely engaged in a process of self-management, self-motivation, self-discipline and self-
organisation, requiring them to invest more of their own time (un-paid) and money into the organisation of their work. In this way, external discipline becomes replaced by self discipline or a form of 'professionalism'.

The legal, social and emotional constraints or pressures associated with selling sexual services that are experienced by private escorts in the organisation of their work, have been fundamental to constructing themselves as 'professional' or independent operators or businesswomen. The professional discourse drawn upon by private escorts promotes pride in skills, knowledge and altruism, and crafts a sex worker identity that is bound up in the invisibility of their work and their ability to sustain it. Ironically then, their claim to being professional workers rests upon their ability to avoid disclosure of the nature of their work. The local informal registration scheme provides escorts with an extrajudicial sanction to operate discreetly from the suburbs. This requires escorts to register with the police and negotiate advertising policy with the provincial newspapers for 'discreet' client contact. In turn, this is made possible by the ambiguity of criminalised legislation and the illegality of their work. Thus, in this version of 'professionalism' the invisible nature of sex work, carried out in discreet private spaces is paramount.

My discussion of phone sex extends the issue of ambiguity and anonymity and questions both ideas and definitions of sex work, as well as the concept of sexual intimacy. Phone sex involves both real bodies that never meet, and fictional bodies created from a collection of actors, objects, meanings, experiences and images. Thus, it is both real and fiction, embodied and disembodied. It is invisible and yet highly visible through advertisements and popular media depictions. Similar to the massage parlour and private escort markets, 'time' is used to define the phone sex services provided. Operators work to time segments and set fees accordingly for those segments. Thus, the phone sex operator works within both 'real' time and fantasy time, which she is in control of. In addition, like conventional sex work, the phone sex encounter uses assemblages of things to facilitate the service, and in a sense, to mimic a conventional sex work encounter. As a medium, the telephone excludes the visual and allows for the creation of fantasy that the face to face interaction can not. Thus, in this absence of a visual link, both the operator and the client are able to maintain a certain anonymity, allowing for a less self-conscious and a more imaginative encounter (see Hall, 1995). In

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3 However, mobile technology is increasingly shifting the boundaries of traditional telephones and as such, it remains to be seen if phone sex undertaken through the use of 'p2p mobiles' will cross over into the regulatory territory of pornography or conventional sex services.
this way, the invisibility/anonymity of the phone sex service becomes an integral part of how phone sex operators construct their working identity and thus make sense of their participation in this form of sex work.

Policy makers have largely overlooked the phone sex market. The lack of physical or 'embodied' interaction means that as a sexual service, phone sex escapes traditional legislation and regulations that govern 'embodied' prostitution. The fact that phone sex takes place between two consenting adults, and is not made available to an audience, means that this activity also escapes pornography prohibitions. Thus, regulation of phone sex businesses and operators has been left to the private business sector, such as the telecommunications supplier, advertisers, and financial organisations. In this way, operators and phone sex businesses have to negotiate what are often contradictory, ambiguous and morally driven mainstream work and business policies. Furthermore, though the service is not illegal, the securing of monies in exchange for the service is problematic for the phone sex operators/businesses. Phone sex businesses and operators must resort to the use of 'alternative' methods for money collection. I documented their use of gambling accounts, 'assumed' names/purposes to secure credit card systems/facilities and the operation of 0900 services.

Similar to the escort and massage parlour markets, the play on ambiguity allows phone sex operators and businesses to secure methods of operation (0900 services, business and private lines) in addition to payment facilities. More importantly, these arrangements and the monitoring of the market are predicated upon trust and 'discretion'. For example, Telecom New Zealand, the telecommunications supplier, is prepared to 'turn a blind eye' to the existence or operation of phone sex businesses using their 0900 services on the condition that they operate 'discreetly', without causing public complaint. Thus, phone sex operators and businesses, like massage parlours and private escorts, are required to disguise or hide the true nature of their business and to practice self-discipline.

The absence of legislation leaves this market in sexual services open to many interpretations in terms of defining and identifying it, as 'legitimate' work, for example. Operators find themselves having to negotiate informal often ambiguous policies and frameworks with peripheral actors such as Telecom New Zealand, metropolitan newspapers and so forth. Though phone sex is not defined in law as prostitution per se, it is nonetheless associated with pornography and sex work and, as such, becomes a
stigmatised occupation. Thus, phone sex operators, like their counterparts in other sex markets, must undertake a form of emotion work/management in order to deal with the discrepancies that occur between their on-line work selves and their 'real' self. Similar to the discourse of professionalism drawn upon by private escorts in order to craft a work identity and thereby sustain their participation in sex work, phone sex operators manage their work through careful self-management and management of time and the fantasy characters that they create.

The practical regulation of the diverse sex markets in New Zealand incorporates a collection of informal arrangements negotiated at a local level. Indeed, the diversity of the sex markets has not been reflected or captured in legislation aimed specifically at containing or controlling the sex work industry. This study has illustrated how containment or 'tolerance' of the sex industry is characteristic of the approach to regulation undertaken in New Zealand. A redefinition of 'policing' prostitution has seen the inclusion of government departments, community groups, commercial businesses as well as the police worked out at a local level in the regulation of sex markets. What has emerged is an approach of supervision predicated on trust and the self-regulation of markets. This approach aligns the ambiguity of the informal and formal arrangements that attempt to set boundaries for the world of sex work.

The ambiguity regarding the practice of sex work has recently been 'tested' by a decriminalisation bill that seeks to establish sex work as legal and accountable. This attempt to shift away from the ambiguous and informal arrangements that I have described may well have consequences not foreseen by the advocates for legal reform. The passage of the Prostitution Reform Act 2003 decriminalised prostitution in New Zealand, and like other countries that have followed this same path, the new legal requirements reposition local councils as the agents responsible for the regulation of legal sex work. For local councils, this development raises the issue of 'zoning' and the dilemmas associated with regulating the location of both visible forms of sex work, such as street work, as well as potentially compromise the invisible forms, such as escorts. Though the Prostitution Reform Act 2003 is in the early stages of its application, it is already proving to be a highly complex process, requiring a re-negotiation of relationships and alliances, and a reallocation of policing responsibilities to fall in-line with the diversity of sex markets and community needs. It remains to be seen whether or not the ambiguities associated with sex work will be removed by legislation. The legal recognition of sex work as work may serve to both safeguard workers, by bringing
to the light what was once hidden, and compromise them through the removal of the ambiguity supporting their line of work.
Appendices
Methodology

Ethnography as Networking/Writing

This chapter outlines the processes I used to gather material for this study, and my reflections on being part of the study. In the following pages, I focus on how my research methods inform and reflect the central concerns of the thesis in so far as control, power, subjectivity and positionality are central to the processes of fieldwork.

I took my first tentative steps into researching the sex work industry in 1998 for a pilot study, one that looked at prostitution legislation and its implications for women working as 'prostitutes' in Christchurch. The study was part of my assessment for a Sociology honours research paper and involved interviewing three women who worked in different markets of the industry (street work, private escort and massage parlour). I had no previous knowledge or experience of the sex work industry other than being exposed to media representations and academic accounts of prostitution (generally from overseas). The data that I collected from the interviews predictably indicated a number of differences between these three markets, not only regarding their location, but also in terms of how prostitution legislation influenced the organisation of these sex markets and sex work practice in general. This preliminary excursion into the field of prostitution gave me a small insight into the actual complexity of the relationships and arrangements that are responsible for the containment, regulation and organisation of the diverse sex markets outside formal legislation. Thus, through a combination of my own curiosity and fascination for the topic, the encouragement I received from sex industry representatives and personnel, and the gap I had discovered in New Zealand sex work literature, I decided to try and unwrap the complex relations that make up the sex markets in New Zealand.

Rather than follow research trends, beginning from a particular standpoint with formulated hypotheses, for example, looking at prostitution as a form of deviant behaviour (Edwards
or sex work as a form of exploitation (Høigard & Finstad, 1992; Jeffreys, 1997) or the victimisation of prostitutes through criminal legislation and the argument for legislation/decriminalisation (Knight, 1987; Jordan, 1992; Robinson 1987), I was more interested in the way in which sex markets and sex work practice were organised. This meant that I needed to look outside the traditional dyadic study of the client-sex worker encounter/transaction and the issue of power within this relationship. Moreover, this required me to explore the social organisation of prostitution in all its complexities (O'Neill, 1997), and in particular to consider the configuration of networked actors that produces sex markets.

In order to achieve these objectives I decided to narrow my focus and restrict my sample to the sex markets in Christchurch, in particular the organisation of and relations between the massage parlour, private escort and phone sex markets. I did not want to undertake a large scale sampling of the sex work industry using surveys and interviews and run the risk of reproducing a focus on dyadic relations, principally those of worker-client, and worker-pimp (Perkins, 1991; Phoenix, 1999). I also did not want to restrict myself by having to rely solely on interviews as a means of data collection, whereby the narratives of sex workers alone present the reality of events, actions and organisation of prostitution (Kempadoo & Doezema, 1999; McLeod, 1982; Plumridge & Chetwynd, 1996; Robinson, 1987). I wanted to undertake an ethnographic study of the day to day complexities of organising sex work and sex markets.

Like a number of contemporary researchers, I decided to use multiple strategies of ethnographic information gathering, such as participation, observation, interviews, informal networking, and documentary research as the means to collect data (see Albert, 2001; Day, 1990; 1996; Flowers, 1998b; McKeganey & Barnard, 1996; Sterk, 1996). I believed such an approach would enable me to corroborate information I acquired through interviews and informal conversations with my field observations and documentary research (Becker & Geer, 1982; Fielding, 1993). Though sociologists have often used ethnographic research methods, usually with a shorter duration in the field than anthropologists, I wanted to embark upon a more in-depth longitudinal study of the sex work industry than had previously been attempted in New Zealand (Eden, 1997; Knight, 1987; Robinson, 1987; Jordan, 1991, 1992, 1997). Thus, I made the decision to work in the sex work industry as a shift manager1 in a massage parlour.

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1 We were referred to and called ourselves shift managers at Studio 14B when we carried out the duties of a receptionist with the added 'power' to hire and fire workers within our discretion.
Mixing research methods within a single research project is considered to be the best approach to tackling the many obstacles that can hinder studies of sex work (Flowers, 1998; McKeganey & Barnard, 1996). Bolton goes further and suggests that the choice of research method should be guided by the particularities of the group or culture to be studied, thereby enabling the researcher to encounter the real problems that confront the group as well as the aspects of the group or culture that are salient to its members (Bolton, 1995, 1996). He suggests that extensive (traditional) ethnographic research, an approach that allows for prolonged and intimate contact with the field, or 'immersion' as Strathern (1999) refers to it, is 'the surest route to understanding a culture' (Bolton, 1995). For example, Bolton opted for a controversial approach of sexual participant observation, through immersion in a particular gay community to experience and address the processes of adaptation and change towards issues such as AIDS (Bolton, 1995, 1996). Though Bolton's approach to ethnographic research has been considered unorthodox (see Wengle, 1988), he does point to the inadequacy of 'rapid assessment procedures' or more structured techniques of data collection, such as focus group interviews, surveys and structured interviews. Such techniques are likely to produce unreliable guidelines to actual behaviour and therefore fail to provide insights and understanding into the behaviours, in Bolton's case, of the sexual practices of individual gay men with regards to HIV and AIDS (Bolton, 1995).

Bolton's novel approach to ethnographic fieldwork underlines the advantages of the researcher becoming a participant in the study rather than a passive observer (1995). Likewise, Punch (1993) claims that, in order for him to understand the social organisation of his study group, he needed to see their 'backstage' performances (Goffman, 1990), by observing or partaking in their 'down time' rituals (see also Hobbs, 1988; Manning, 1977; Norris, 1993; Van Maanen, 1992). Similarly for myself, participant observation presented the means to take part in and experience some of the routines and rituals involved in sex work in addition to organisational strategies and struggles, as well as the mundane aspects of massage parlour work (Scambler, 1997). Interviewing alone is often characterised as the sort of research that involves getting in, getting information and getting out with a minimal involvement in the day to day complexities of people for whom your research topic is the stuff of everyday life (Goffman, 1989). By contrast, participatory research presents the opportunity to experience the field as a 'witness' rather than as an interviewer on the periphery (Goffman, 1989). Moreover, working in a massage parlour provided me with
some semblance of legitimacy or membership of the sex work industry, and this was crucial to the nature of data I collected.

The ambiguous legal status of sex work and the stigma attached to the sex industry, not to mention the invisibility of certain sex markets, initially presented me with a number of methodological problems in terms of access and the ability to collect data; for example, locating women who were currently working - or who had worked - in the sex work industry and, more importantly, locating women who wished to talk openly about and acknowledge their involvement in sex work had the potential to prove to be problematic. Barnard encountered similar dilemmas in her research of street prostitution, and comments that it is one thing to locate a study population but it is quite another to initiate the type of contact which enables the development of a good enough relationship that will enable the researcher to collect sensitive and often personal data (1992). To study the interactions, activities and relations of a set of people, the researcher needs to enlist the help of some of those people and rely, at least initially, on their knowledge to enable the researcher to develop a 'deep familiarity' with the field (Goffman, 1989). This cannot be accomplished without trust. Trust provides not only for access, but also mobility within the field and these features are central when studying organised and legally compromised worlds (Barnard, 1992; Sterk, 1996).

The development of 'deep familiarity' (Goffman, 1989), provides the researcher with a certain amount of 'legitimacy' to move around the field and begin the process of snowballing/networking. This is crucial in circumstances where the research subjects operate within illegal and stigmatised networks. However, as a researcher I was also very aware of the potential (directly or indirectly) for exploiting the trust of informants who already occupy a legally ambiguous space, not to mention the stigma that surrounds sex work. I was also familiar with feminist writers who refer to the powerlessness of women as respondents/informants in the research process, assuming that the researcher by virtue of her education and status is always more powerful than the respondents (particularly when researching marginal groups) (Cotterill, 1992; Oakley, 1981; Stanley & Wise, 1983). I understood, like O'Neill, that aspects of power are present in all of our relationships, and that what is actually important is how we handle the differing situations in which we are involved. However, unlike these more traditional ethnographers, I was not interested in focussing solely upon a group view of sex workers. I was interested in how the sex
industry was organised and with this in mind attempted to position myself in such a way that it would be possible to discover the field by connecting with its key actors or, as it will become clear, actors coming to me and following actors (Latour, 1987: 19).

The following sections discuss the process of my ethnographic research in the sex work industry. I document and explain the hurdles, dilemmas and issues that I was faced with in obtaining connections, establishing trust and relationships with informants, negotiating ethical dilemmas associated with the presentation of the researcher, and issues of confidentiality.

**Getting into the Field: access, networks and friendships**

Sex work is an illegal, sometimes 'hidden', and stigmatised form of work. Thus, 'getting in' can be problematic for researchers. For example, the unsuccessful attempt at ethnographic field work by Lever and Kanouse (1998) (both experienced ethnographers) in their study of off-street prostitution in Los Angeles, highlights the difficulty of securing a reliable and efficient route into the field. Their attempts to learn about the social organisation of off-street prostitution by non-participant observation and on-premises interviews of employees met with limited success, in spite of the attempts to gain access. Thus, observational data was gathered by making visits to nightclubs and 'known' hotels. However, these observations were limited in their capacity to provide detailed information on the organisation of sex work/markets (Lever & Kanouse 1998).

Researchers interested in studying the activities and interactions of networks of people generally enlist the help of some those people, at least initially, and rely on their knowledge to develop a "deep familiarity" with the networks (Goffman 1989). Key people or organisations are often used as gatekeepers or sponsors to introduce the researcher, to provide local knowledge and contacts. However, Minichiello et al. point out that it is one thing locating a gatekeeper, but it is important to be aware of the relationship between the gatekeeper and potential informants, particularly if the gatekeeper occupies an official

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2 Some women working within the sex work industry have difficulty accepting the sex work identity and do not see what they do as prostitution. For example, women providing masturbatory services only (hand jobs) (see Bryant & Palmer, 1975; McKeganey & Barnard 1996; Perkins, 1981; Velarde & Warlick, 1973).

3 In my initial pilot study I interviewed the co-ordinator of the Christchurch branch of the NZPC who subsequently agreed to be my sponsor/gatekeeper for the pilot study and arranged for me to meet the three sex workers that I interviewed. Two of the women were volunteers at the NZPC drop-in centre (and active sex workers), and one of the women worked at the massage parlour two doors down the street from the drop-in centre.

4 Known to be frequented by prostitutes
position since this could impact upon the ability of the researcher to build trust or rapport with the informant (Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell, & Alexander, 1996).

Various strategies have been used to try to open up sex industry networks for research. Researchers have attempted to contact sex workers through a variety of formal settings such as sexual health clinics (Day & Ward, 1990; Harcourt & Philpot, 1990; Pyett, 1996), prostitutes' collectives/groups (O'Connell Davidson, 1998; O'Neill & Barberet, 2000; Plumridge, Chetwynd, Reed, & Gifford, 1997; Pyett & Warr, 1999b), attending court or probation centres, or accompanying police on their rounds (Benson & Matthews, 2000; Sharpe, 1998). Other approaches that have required a more participatory role have seen researchers getting involved in volunteer/outreach work with street workers to supply condoms, sterile injecting equipment, and information for HIV and risk reduction as a means for accessing sex workers (see McKeganey and Barnard, 1996). For McKeganey and Barnard, this involved walking around all the streets where sex was sold and approaching and introducing themselves and their service to as many sex workers as possible (1996). Contact with sex workers has also been made through a sex worker 'sponsor' or gatekeeper (see Eden, 1997; O'Connell Davidson, 1995; Sterk, 1996). Sterk, for example, opted for 'hanging out on the street' to observe the day to day life of street work (1996). She began by walking around the areas that street prostitution took place for a number of days trying to find a 'way in', someone who would talk to her and thereby introduce her to the world of street-work (Sterk, 1996). Eden on the other hand used the NZPC as his key sponsor for accessing sex workers (1997).

Initially, the NZPC was pivotal in providing me with an introduction to sex workers for my pilot study and, thereafter, I became a regular visitor to the Friday night social drinks at the NZPC drop-in centre. This social activity provided me with a base from which I slowly began to network with people involved in the sex work industry, with community members who wanted to maintain connections with the NZPC, as well as with fellow researchers. Through this process I began to piece together an alternative account of the sex industry in New Zealand from those I had constructed from my readings (primarily from overseas). These Friday social gatherings provided a space to sit down with wine and food and talk, and also allowed me to listen to the stories of people involved in both performing sex work

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5 Peter Eden and Libby Plumridge.
and on the periphery. In addition, it was also an opportunity for me to find out about the issues and happenings that had engaged the NZPC that week.

Gatekeepers, such as the NZPC, ensure that their particular group or community is represented in the best light by restricting access to that group to 'outsiders' (Reynolds, 2002; Walsh, 1998). In this case, their outreach work brings them into regular contact with sex workers, owners, managers, in addition to other actors such as the police, health and social workers, the media and so forth. Furthermore, the NZPC has been involved in, facilitated, and supported research into the sex work industry (Eden, 1997; Plumridge & Chetwynd, 1996; Plumridge et al., 1997). However, the NZPC is also an organisation that represents the sexual health, legal, and social interests of a stigmatised and socially discriminated group of workers and, as such, they also hold very strong political opinions and agendas. Eden, in his study of the industry, comments that the NZPC has worked hard to raise the image of the sex work industry, trying to decrease the levels of social and legal harassment for sex workers and to present prostitution as a form of work (1997: 120). Thus, the NZPC has an interest in protecting its interests and, therefore, monitors whatever research is being undertaken.

Eden (1997) describes a somewhat 'thorough' interview with the national coordinator of the NZPC before his research was given the unofficial 'seal of approval' by the organisation and granted sponsorship from the NZPC for his study. I was also 'interviewed' by the national NZPC co-ordinator regarding what at the time were my fledgling research questions. Like Eden, approval from Wellington was crucial for access to insider information with regards to sex work and issues. My experience was somewhat less intimidating than Eden’s, since he was asked to speak at length about the focus and intentions of his proposed research. I had observed first hand Eden's dealings as a male with the NZPC in the latter stages of his thesis and began to realise the implications of doing research through a public and highly politicised organisation, and decided not to use the NZPC as a means to access sex workers. Though I supported the principles of the NZPC and their efforts in lobbying for law reform and the decriminalisation of prostitution, I wanted to pursue my own line of study without the obligations attached to sponsored research. My choice arose not only from witnessing the constraints imposed upon Eden, but also from my realisation that, as a woman, I had the potential for greater

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6 The co-ordinator would introduce each person arriving to the group, with a little synopsis of our connection with her or the NZPC.

7 I received incredible support and encouragement from the co-ordinator of the Christchurch branch to pursue my interest in the industry and embark upon a doctoral thesis.
mobility in the sex industry without ongoing sponsorship from an organisation such as the NZPC. I was interested in mobilising a different point of entry.

To avoid the dilemmas of negotiating access through a gatekeeper, Flowers opted to gain access to sex workers by participating/working in the sex industry as a phone sex operator (1998a). In this way, she was able to position herself both as a worker and researcher in the phone sex market, enabling her to construct and gain access to informal networks and understandings of the organisation of sex work and sex work practice not normally accessible through interviews alone (Flowers, 1998a). Thus, like Flowers, I decided that working in the sex industry would not only provide for a better understanding of sex work, but also allow me to establish my own networks without having to solely rely on a sponsor. However, 'getting in' presented a problem in terms of acquiring a role or position that I could occupy/perform within the research.

The NZPC provided me with an entrance into the sex work industry as well as support for my research, for which I will always be grateful. However, I must admit that, initially, in spite of my warm welcome to the inner circle of the NZPC, I did feel rather self-conscious and 'green'. I lacked the 'insider' status of having first hand experience and knowledge of sex work practice and felt ill-equipped to talk confidently about issues of discrimination, stigmatisation and discourse surrounding decriminalisation. It was not possible for me to gain access to sex workers and observe the organisation of sex work through outreach work with the NZPC since they operated as a peer based organisation and volunteers were either currently working or had worked in the sex work industry. Nevertheless, the Friday evenings spent at the NZPC allowed me to begin to establish my own informal networks and it was from a chance conversation with a woman (who later became a good friend) over drinks at the NZPC that I was offered the opportunity to work as a receptionist in a massage parlour. It just so happened that the parlour where she was working needed a receptionist urgently, and a job in the industry would serve my purposes as an entrance into the field and relieve me of the need for sponsorship by the NZPC. Like Becker's art worlds (Becker, 1963), the sex industry, as I later found out, primarily utilises informal networks and referrals or recommendations as a means for personnel recruitment.

Thus, from my humble beginnings of a pilot study and initial contact with the NZPC, my networks and identity began to span across diverse sex industry networks through a

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8 I was recommended not only by my friend, but also by one of the interviewees from the pilot study who operated from the same parlour.
process of 'snowballing'. Indeed my second job in a massage parlour was the result of a 'referral'. I was also offered a position as a receptionist by the manager of a massage parlour where I was interviewing one of the workers\(^9\). The snowball effect is no more obvious than in the way in which I was able to contact phone sex operators located outside Christchurch. For example, I initially rang a Wellington operator whose number was advertised in *The Dominion*. She later gave me the numbers of two other private operators\(^10\). One of these women sub-contracted work to three other operators. She had taken over the Wellington business previously owned by Larry who was now operating 0900 lines in Auckland\(^11\). Contacting private escorts and massage parlour workers followed a similar route of referrals in many cases facilitated through my active participation in Christchurch massage parlours and the use of informal networking. I had become both a researcher and worker in the sex industry. This hybrid position facilitated the construction of, and access to, networks that formal interviewing would not have uncovered.

**Field Ethics: consent and confidentiality**

The Human Ethics Committee at the University of Canterbury required an interview schedule and a sample of the information sheet and consent forms that I would be giving to the participants in this study. However, the information sheet and the consent forms (see appendices 1 & 2) were problematic for the first couple of women that I interviewed for this study. Both women commented at the end of their interview that they had felt intimidated prior to the interview by the information sheet. They said that they felt worried after reading the sheet that they would not be able to adequately address the issues and topics for discussion. These feelings of unease were clearly evident during the interviews when the participants kept asking for reassurance, by asking if they were on the right track.

Sex work networks are characteristically organised around verbal agreements and unspoken understandings. For example, sex work practice is principally learned through oral storytelling and by the piecing together of shared knowledge, experiences and ideas of good and bad sex work practice that serve as a vehicle of community memory or a knowledge base for workers (see Orr, 1990; Plummer, 1995). The information sheet that I

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\(^9\) I declined this offer. The politics in the industry at the time would not have made it a prudent decision to accept the offer and thereby potentially threatened access to potential participants.

\(^10\) Operators who used and advertised residential or business numbers (not 0900) for initial client contact.

\(^11\) Though Larry was reluctant to pass me onto any of the women who 'worked' for him I was nevertheless able to contact two women through Cathy, the woman who had initially referred me to Larry.
provided for the participants contained topics pertaining to sex work which are regularly
discussed informally around the table in the staff room of massage parlours during 'down
time'. However, when presented formally on a piece of paper, these topics/issues took on a
different form and no longer seemed familiar. Thus, by presenting these topics/issues
formally in a printed document I not only disrupted accepted conventions of sex workers
(formalising what is implicit), but also rendered the interview process problematic for the
participants. At the end of an interview with Kelly, I asked her for her comments on the
interview process:

"When I took it [the information sheet and consent form] home and
had a read, I have to tell you I thought about giving you a ring and
backing out, seriously (laughs). I think I was just overwhelmed by it
being so official and it just made me feel real funny. And just before I
came in here I was feeling really nervous, like this was going to be a
test."
(Kelly)

In addition, the written consent forms also presented a dilemma for four out of the five
initial participants. The illegality and 'hidden' nature of sex work is such that the disclosure
of real identities can be a problematic issue for sex workers. Though workers are required
to submit their 'real' personal details for formal registers, such as the massage parlour
register, this is often done reluctantly or circumvented. Furthermore, for many women, sex
work is undertaken as a means to supplement their income such as unemployment/child
benefits and, therefore, any documents that required their signatures and real names could
be perceived as a potential threat. My solution was to inform and receive consent verbally.
Just as the sex industry operates on verbal agreements and unspoken understandings
between sex workers, clients and management, I decided to apply the same procedures to
interviews with sex workers and management. Thus, as Agar, suggests:

The goal is to begin your work honestly by presenting yourself and
your task in some way that will make sense to the group members.
(Agar, 1996:111)

I informed each participant verbally of the focus and general information about the project,
gave the assurance that all material would be confidential, and also told them that they could
terminate the interview at any time and withdraw their support and information from the
project if they so wished. The only exception to this procedure was Larry, a male employer in the industry, who ran a phone sex business. He wanted to confirm my credentials and requested that I send him an information sheet and a contact telephone number. He returned my call after receiving this information and agreed to take part in the study. Larry's initial caution, as he later explained, was due to fierce competition in the phone sex market. He wanted to make sure he was not going to divulge information to his competitors.

I ensured the confidentiality of the participants by replacing their working names with pseudonyms and also changed the names of the massage parlours, streets, and the businesses which they refer to in their narratives\(^\text{12}\). In the massage parlour, for example, real names are rarely spoken in the day to day routine of work. That is not to say they are unknown. Women who work regularly together on the same shift often socialised and shared intimacies during the shift or outside work, and though I was privy to the personal details of all workers via my access to the Massage Parlour Register, I always made a point of using their pseudonyms at work\(^\text{13}\). On a couple of occasions outside work, I was required to do some quick thinking and recall the real names of a couple of women with whom I had developed a friendship. We had bumped into each other with our respective partners/family in a shopping mall and it was left to me to do the introductions. Looking back on these incidents, I have wondered if they had been tests on their behalf to gauge my reactions.

I also developed a number of good friendships with women I worked with that have lasted for the duration of my involvement in the study. We socialised outside formal arrangements of work and continued to do so when we ceased to work together and moved on to work in different locations. I was introduced and socialised with their families and friends, the majority of which had no idea that these women worked in the sex work industry\(^\text{14}\). Though I had no problem switching from working (fictional) name to real name with any of these women to suit the context we were in, I was, however, always on my guard and unless otherwise instructed would not divulge the origins of our friendships. During my entire experience of working in massage parlours I can safely lay claim to never having mixed up real names and pseudonyms either outside or inside the work context.

\(^{12}\) This is consistent with the requirements of the Human Ethics Committee at the University of Canterbury.
\(^{13}\) Having said this, some workers would often refer to their real names when they phoned the parlour. In this situation, it seemed that they expected me to know them by these names.
\(^{14}\) A couple of the women left the massage parlour to work as private escorts.
I collected interview data on audio tapes. I did not encounter any objections to tape recorded interviews from any of the participants. I also tape recorded telephone interviews and asked the permission of the participants. All the interview recordings were coded with pseudonyms and dates. I transcribed all of my interviews simply because I wanted to listen closely to them and make small notes as part of the process. Above all, I wanted to make sure that the interview tapes were transcribed verbatim. These transcripts also bore the pseudonym of the participant, date and a small synopsis of the interview. These were all stored in a secure filing cabinet in my office. There was nothing to connect the participants to the tape recordings or transcripts. Similarly, in my field notes I was careful to change or remove the names of businesses. Though representatives from official organisations agreed to use their real names, when writing up I decided not to, simply to avoid giving weight to narratives of 'named' officials over those of 'hidden' sex work personnel. Thus, all names of participants in the thesis are pseudonyms.

Working the Field: disclosure, deceptions and presenting the researcher

Traditional guidelines for ethnographic research include gaining entry to the field, establishing relationships, preserving objectivity and maintaining the observer's role. However, May suggests that objectivity in social research has been used as an inability or unwillingness to be reflexive and engaged in research (1993: 75). Naples (1996) also points out that preserving objectivity is particularly troubling for feminist researchers, since the research process always invites questions concerning issues of power and control and encourages the establishment of reciprocal, non-exploitative relationships with participants. Wolf takes this further and claims that reflexive approaches - that have long been accredited to feminist research - have become the standard for ethnographic research (Wolf 1992). Indeed, ethnographic researchers now are encouraged to build relationships within the field as a necessary part of gaining access and trust in ethnographic encounters, particularly when working with marginalised groups of people. My purpose in using participant observation was to generate an account of how the everyday world of sex work was produced through participating and observing the networks associated with it. As the research progressed, I gained an understanding of relations within those worlds and was able to draw on my own experiences and positioning to reflect on how I and others constructed this everyday world.
From the onset of my field work I had to make a number of what I will call 'professional' decisions which would effectively establish some provisional boundaries for me to work within until I became more acquainted with the field. For example, I had to decide how I would present myself in the field, how far I would go in terms of data collection (would I get involved in performing sex work), how I would establish and maintain relationships, and where my research would begin and stop in a particular work setting such as the massage parlour.

I decided to use my real name while working in the massage parlour. This act may not seem to be out of the ordinary; however, the sex work industry is predicated on fantasy and the majority of personnel use a 'work name', even management. Furthermore, commercial sex businesses such as massage parlours often operate under business pseudonyms for confidentiality purposes and to avoid the 'wrath' or rather prejudice of financial institutions (banking and credit card companies). The clients who use the diverse sex markets also generally use a pseudonym (John, Dave and Bob are popular names), and personal biographies of sex work personnel are often hazy revisions of the original or complete fabrications. Thus, my decision to use my real name was an attempt to present myself 'honestly' in order for me to eventually gain the trust of the workers and management in the massage parlour, and present myself as non-threatening in terms of competition.

However, using my real name could also be read as an attempt to separate myself from sex work per se. My decision to embark upon work in a massage parlour was not welcomed by my (then) partner, who later confessed during a moment of rare honesty, that he had received constant harassment from his friends about my 'role' at the massage parlour. Furthermore, he had begun to wonder himself if I would, or had been tempted to 'give it a go' as he so eloquently put it. This was not an isolated incident and I frequently encountered a level of suspicion and, occasionally, a certain amount of animosity when my 'other' job was disclosed during conversations. In addition, I can not ignore the possibility that I came into the research setting with my own set of biases too. Thus, the use of my real name can also be perceived to be symbolic of me not wanting to wear the prostitute label (be it the result of a Spanish/catholic upbringing, fear of the social stigma, or my level of self esteem at the time).

This brings me to the issue of disclosure, what to say and who to tell. Norris suggests that the explanations that one constructs for the research are always conditional upon the audience being addressed (1993:128). Similarly Flowers (1998a) comments on her
experience as a phone-sex-operator, that she saw no need to announce that she was a graduate student since such an announcement itself would have been self-aggrandising. However, when asked directly about herself by co-workers, Flowers revealed that she was concurrently a graduate student, but did not go into the finer details (that she was a PhD candidate researching sex work etc). Generally, when she disclosed her graduate student status, she found that this information was not well received by her co-workers, making them feel a little uncomfortable, putting a distance where there had been camaraderie. Furthermore, Flowers found herself responding with her own stories of harassment and agony in order to increase their comfort level. Thus, the benefits of such 'modest' deceptions for Flowers were significant in that she gained entry to the setting and relative acceptance, enabling her to experience phone-sex work (1998b: 293).

It was always my intention to be honest with my co-workers and fellow shift managers at the massage parlour regarding my presence there. When I initially embarked upon my field work I was armed with my information sheets, consent forms and the good intentions of professional ethics that I had read about in many accounts of ethnographic field work (see Darlington & Scott, 2002; Gilbert, 1993; Tolich & Davidson, 1999). However, as I soon discovered from my initial job interview with Barbie at Studio 14B massage parlour, and my first face-to-face interviews with sex workers, this approach would have to be revised. The extract from my field notes (below) documents my job interview with Barbie at Studio 14B and illustrates how presenting myself competently as a receptionist/manager in the massage parlour was given priority over implications of conducting research during this time:

> The actual interview lasted a matter of minutes and I got the impression that the job was mine before I even got there. I had expected Barbie, the manager, to interrogate me, or at least take a look at my references and C.V. since I would essentially be in sole charge of the business on the shift that I would be working. However, Barbie appeared to be eager to get the formalities out of the way and was keen for me to start as soon as possible. I had to write down my details for her (my name address and phone number). She then proceeded to tell me that there are two hourly rates, one was formal and the other informal (doing research and getting paid too, I hadn't figured on that!), and it was my choice how I wanted to organise payment. I opted for first option. She then organised a couple of training sessions (paid,
this was getting better!) over the next couple of evenings and I would start my shift three days later on Friday.

She then asked if I had any questions, and at this point I attempted to discuss my reason for wanting the job, that I was there primarily as a researcher. This was dismissed with a wave of her hand. "Yes I know Claudia and Sam told me about what you're doing, it's up to you if you want to tell anyone, doesn't bother me", she snapped. We then set off on a tour around the parlour, which looked like a maze and I began to fret about how I was ever going to find my way around the place. Barbie gave me a verbal list of things to do when closing the parlour and what I must do when I come on shift, which ladies to keep an eye on, to make sure that they turned up on time and were dressed and ready and waiting at 6.30pm. I was introduced to a couple of women who were sitting around a table smoking, before being whisked off back to the office. Barbie asked me if I had ever worked before, when I told her I hadn't, she laughed and hinted that you could not work in the sex industry and not be tempted by the money to actually get involved or "jump the counter" as she put it. She then gave me a copy of the Studio 14B 'Bible' to take home and issued the instructions that I wasn't to take any shit from the girls and if I had any questions I should ask Claudia as she would be working on my Friday shift. Did I have any questions? Well, I had a head bursting with questions! I asked if there would be someone (a bouncer) looking after the door on Friday to which Barbie told me that I was the bouncer, the manager, the receptionist, and the bar manager. Furthermore, she advised me that I shouldn't let anyone in that I wouldn't go through with myself! Well that really didn't answer my question, but I decided against pursuing this line of questioning. Thus, with that thought and the Studio 14B Bible I was sent off on my merry way to prepare for my 'training' sessions.

(Field notes 16/5/97)

Fortunately, I was relieved of the responsibility of explaining my presence by the gossip grapevine that operated within the massage parlour working in my favour to alert the majority of women to the fact that I was a researcher/student studying the sex industry.
Thus, I was not faced with the awkward situation of going in 'cold' and having to explain who I was and what I was doing. What followed for me was the inevitable interrogation on a regular basis around the gossip table for the first couple of months of "what do I think so far?" Initially, then, I was the subject of research. This can be seen in Kondo's account of her experience as a Japanese-American woman studying Japanese work and family life (1990). Kondo's recasting of her 'self' was a response to the management of cultural strangeness. Though Japanese in appearance, she lacked the cultural competencies to allow her to become part of the field. The cultural competencies of how to act and behave and the nuances of interaction and engagement were observed and learned by Kondo over the course of her fieldwork (1990: 12). Thus, just as Kondo (1990) was drawn into being 'Japanese', I was drawn into the world of sex work and I became just another 'damn shift manager' or 'one of the girls'. Similarly, Hastrup's experience of assuming the role of milkmaid/shepherdess within an Icelandic community, implied a particular kind of presence that made her an object in the Icelanders' discourse. Like Kondo and Hastrup (1995: 17), the culture of my research subjects was "written over me".

My willingness to assume and learn the role of massage parlour manager in order to understand the organisation of sex work allowed the women to position themselves as experts in relation to me, rather than as the passive observed. In this way, my presence was perceived as less threatening to the workers' sense making of their involvement in sex work. Agar argues that when entering the field, the researcher essentially becomes the student in order to begin to understand, observe, and participate (1996). Thus, the role of 'apprentice' not only provides the researcher with first hand experience of group interpretations of the daily reality and lives of group members. Importantly, also, the willingness of the researcher to participate in the democratising process of 'apprenticeship' to the group can be critical in terms of group acceptance and the establishment of trust (Agar, 1996; Punch, 1993). The peculiarity of my apprenticeship was that I entered the industry as a manager.

Furthermore, what I would describe as my 'otherness', the odd combination of my physical appearance and northern English accent was guaranteed to prompt questions, enabling me to embark upon my raison d'être. However, I am aware that not all participants were aware of their participation in the study. For example, often clients unknowingly divulged personal details and history during the course of their visit to the massage parlour without prompting. To inform everyone who walked through the door would have certainly altered the dynamics of the setting with a possible risk to the business and, as mentioned in the
literature, the researcher must decide to act according to the situation (see Norris, 1993; Agar, 1996; Fountain, 1993; Hobbs, 1993). Thus, both by default and design, clients often believed or were led to believe that I was simply a massage parlour receptionist or shift manager. Under such pretences I organised their sexual encounters with sex workers. In this way, the practice of participant observation can be seen as interactionally deceitful (Norris, 1993; Bulmer 1982). However, since I was actively participating in the field as a paid employee of the massage parlour, I was recording my own experience of work, of which the clients were a small part. My hybrid status as a worker/researcher was providing me with the understandings that had not been detailed by other researchers in the sex industry. As the manager of a massage parlour, I was positioned to understand the parlour as a business. This was my job, to coordinate the work of a parlour and present it to clients and the Police in such a way that it ran as a 'normal' business. My positioning as manager provided me with a new perspective on the world of sex work that also differed from the sex workers but at the same time placed me in constant proximity to them. I was fixed in place in my work but the others revolved around me. I mediated between the actors that made up the field.

This raises the issue of how I presented myself in the field in order to establish relationships and trust necessary for gathering knowledge, understanding and experience of massage parlour work. Since field work is undoubtedly an embodied experience, Coffey suggests that in this sense we locate our bodies alongside those of others as we negotiate the spatial context of the field (1999: 59). Thus, we concern ourselves with the positioning, visibility and performance of our own embodied self as we undertake participant observation. What our body looks like, how it is perceived and used can impact upon access, field roles and relationships. This is most easily illustrated in the context of a massage parlour where bodies are displayed, sexualised, disciplined, desired, shaped, touched and talked about. It would be difficult to consider an ethnography of sex work without paying attention to the detail of how bodies, even those of researchers, are organised.

During the fieldwork in a massage parlour I was reflexive about the production and presentation of my own body. I attended to the 'realities' of needing to dress the part of a woman, in a certain style, in order to achieve routine acceptance. I engaged in negotiating, producing and presenting a fieldwork body and in doing so was responding to the norms and rules of the massage parlour, doing what Coffey refers to as "crafting my body as part of the crafting of the field" (1999:68). This was evident in the way in which I dressed for
work, wearing more dramatic make-up, wearing a particular perfume, and purchasing stockings of all things, as part of the bodily performance which I intuitively understood as necessary for the successful accomplishment of the field work (see also Hobbs, 1988; Punch, 1993; Allison, 1994). I even had a section in my wardrobe containing what I referred to as my 'parlour clothes'.

I also had to learn particular physical actions and articulations for the massage parlour context, such as how to respond to awkward situations, and how to provide facial expressions of interest and engagement. For example, the fixed smile to denote interest and empathy with a client, and the accompanying stereotypical actions (Hochschild, 1983), and the use of props are all aspects in the construction of identity and impression management (Goffman, 1990) in fieldwork. I learned through watching the women I worked with, managers and workers, and from them I pieced together my own body management, just as any other worker introduced to this work context has to do.

There is no doubt that my gendered/sexualised body was a key characteristic in my field role and the relationships within it. As a shift manager or receptionist in a massage parlour the appearance and adornment of my body was essential to my fieldwork relations with management, clients and workers. Similar to Allison's experience as a hostess in a Tokyo hostess club (1994), clients were not permitted access to my body, although I did have to accept the inevitable and constant vocal references and attention to my body. However, by establishing the inaccessibility of my body to clients I was able to establish both diverse working relationships to facilitate my research and authority role as a shift manager/receptionist.

**The Manager as Researcher**

The following extracts from my field notes illustrate some of the responsibilities and duties of a shift manager, and the relationships/negotiations involved in the organisation of massage parlour sex work. These extracts also detail the real life dramas and dilemmas, as well as the mundane nature of this work as I and the women I worked with experienced it. They are written from the point of view of the manager and, accordingly, 'interrogate' the sex industry from the point of view of managing, and being managed by workers. As research entries, they explore the work and diverse relations that managers enter into and

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15 As a novice hostess she was spared the actual physical touching by clients, they were only permitted to touch the veteran hostesses (Allison, 1994).
organise in the sex industry. The first extract explores the way the manager is drawn into evaluating and categorising the performance of the women. The issues raised refer to the kinds of judgements about workers made in the industry. Significant issues are not sexual, but rather relate to work and employment:

It has been a very long night. The evening started off with one of the girls going home early with an apparent bad case of cystitis (my cynicism here is due to the fact that Lisa always tries to go home early, usually after she has done at least one job, she hates staying on the shift till the end and I have to struggle every time I work with her to keep her till the end). However, sometimes you have to give the girls the benefit of the doubt and tonight was one of those occasions since Lisa hadn't done a job, but my instinct and later through overhearing the odd snippet of conversation, as well as some subtle hints dropped by Tina, I deduced that she intended to go partying tonight. Also, Claudia is still sick and won't be in tonight.

It was the usual Friday shift change over whereby Barbie gave me the run down on which girls had been issued with warnings and fines and told me to keep an eye on Chloe. For some reason Barbie believes that Chloe has what she calls 'a bad attitude'. As yet I have not witnessed this 'bad attitude' and have found Chloe to be a good worker, possibly too good. What I mean by that is that she is extremely good with the clients when they come into the parlour irrespective whether they are booked in or are 'hostess clients'. The girls have called what Chloe does hustling, however in the service industry she would be congratulated for her 'people skills' and ability to make a sale. There appears to be a fine line in the parlour in terms of hustling and being a 'good hooker'/professional at your job, which is often influenced by an individual's alliances and so forth. Furthermore, Chloe is a popular girl with clients, since she is attractive, with what you would call a perfectly proportioned body and comes across as being very comfortable in it, educated (has an undergraduate degree in English), has the ability to make clients instantly feel comfortable in her company, and in my experience, doesn't transgress the work place policy of the parlour in terms of dress, or behaviour protocol in the
reception/lounge areas, and so in sex industry lingo, she could be considered a 'classy hooker'. Now you would think that this would make her instantly popular with the management here, however, in spite of her high turn over of clients per shift, Chloe only has a small regular client base. This would mean that she is either poaching clientele from the parlour and seeing them on a private basis, or what Barbie suspects, "that she is doing something wrong in the room". For Barbie, this entails overcharging for 'extras', shortchanging the all-inclusive, lying there like a sack of potatoes, lack of sexual skills, being frigid and aloof. As yet I haven't come across anyone that she has done a 'double' with in order to ask about her performance in the room with the client. Thus, Barbie's suspicions are solely based on one client's comment (Andrew), who complains about everyone and everything.

The second extract presents the manager as a line manager, a worker subject to criticism from above. The topic in this section is the things necessary for sex work.

I received my usual reprimand this evening from Barbie for leaving too much laundry for the Saturday shift (it seems to give her great pleasure to haul me over for something. Besides, whether she will acknowledge it or not, it is a fact that there will inevitably be at least one load of washing left over from the last jobs of the shift). In spite of Barbie's enthusiasm for critiquing my end of shift performance, the parlour was in a bit of a mess at shift change, with ashtrays unemptied, the vacuum cleaner strewn across the hallway (chores that the ladies are meant to attend to at the end of each shift, and which are meant to be checked by the shift manager no less!), and 'horror', only one clothes dryer was working, and piled beside the 'working' dryer was a large bundle of laundry. This is not a good start to a shift on a Friday night considering the amount of laundry that is usually generated on this shift!! The last thing we need is to run out of clean towels as sheets can always be recycled. Besides, this serves as fuel for the night shift girls in their ongoing feud with the day shift girls. No one likes to do the laundry and at the beginning of the shift when chores are assigned or chosen (I'm flexible and would rather the girls made the decision), the
late arrivals as a rule get what is left which often tends to be the laundry duties. Unfortunately the late arrivals are usually the ones least likely to be conscientious about doing the laundry, so everyone usually has to do their bit, which causes more aggro!

The third excerpt portrays how the manager is 'regulated' by the workers and clients.

Once Lisa had 'gone home', there were six ladies on the shift plus Diane (the temporary/part-time bar manager), and they were all restless, chain smoking, fidgety and unabashedly declaring their discontent (particularly with the parlour). Thus, the early part of the evening was mainly filled with a 'bitching session', in which few people were spared (I'm sure that I was the focus of their attention at one point!). As per usual after the first couple of hours the girls broke up and moved on to do other things. A couple of the girls played pool, Monique watched TV, Tina curled up on a sofa reading, Diane, Rochelle, Penny and Bibi chatted at the table and Chloe painted her nails. I tried to spend some time in the office/reception at this point to mark some essays I'd brought with me for the evening entertainment. (It is impossible to do work when seated around the gossip tablet). Furthermore, it is good to take a break from the cigarette smoke since everyone smokes and the air conditioning for some reason ensures that the smoke remains in our corner. As per usual I was constantly interrupted by the girls coming over to see what I was doing and to chat. In addition, I had to deal with the usual barrage of telephone inquiries and for some reason this evening I had to run through descriptions of the girls for virtually every call.

A couple of hostess clients arrived around 8.00pm. They just wanted to sit and talk to the girls, have a drink and play pool. They had no intention of going through and the girls seemed happy enough to let them stay past the usual half hour hostess time limit. They were pleasant and entertaining and kept the girls amused for an hour or so. I have to point out here that the girls generally hate hostess clients as it means that they have to do that bit more work in terms of customer service. The clients can come into the parlour and drink at the bar
(buying the drinks) for half an hour before they either book in for a massage (in which case they can carry on drinking) or they are asked to leave. Thus, the girls are reluctant to put effort into chatting to a client who might quite feasibly be there for just a drink and a 'perv' with no intention of booking a massage. However, tonight the girls were quite happy to partake in the entertainment. The clients organized a pool 'tournament' and were buying drinks for the girls. After their departure, two more hostess clients arrived and ended up booking in after ten minutes with Rochelle and Penny. No sooner had they gone through but the buzzer went off again and it was another hostess client. He spent less than three minutes inside the parlour (even then you could sense that it was too much time). I brought him into the lounge/reception/bar area and introduced all the ladies. He remained rooted in the position by the door, looked around quickly and then made his excuses to leave. We had a laugh about him once he had gone. Monique pointed out that he had a look of terror on his face which intensified when he was introduced to the girls perched on their bar stools.

The fourth extract portrays the manager as a participant in the ways the workers 'evaluate' each other:

After that, we had three regular clients and one first timer (individually) arrive within five minutes of each other and so the place came alive again. After the last client left out of this batch, everyone resumed their positions. By this time the girls had consumed a couple of drinks (as a rule, management try not to encourage the girls to drink too much while on shift and so I'm expected to monitor alcohol consumption). Everyone gravitated towards the 'table'. The talk around the table tonight varied, such as family tragedies, client stories, early sexual experiences, gossip about the girls on other shifts, and so forth. No different really to other nights. When you sit around the gossip table there is a tacit understanding that everyone must join in and if you don't, then you are singled out and asked probing questions, so it is much easier to volunteer information. Often, when the usual topics of conversation have been exhausted, one of the girls (like Tina) is generally singled out for ridicule and tonight was no exception. I often
feel embarrassed by their blatant rudeness towards her. She has always struck me as an 'easy-going' and non-confrontational person. She is popular with clients and will diligently go about her work without complaining. She will often agree to go through with some of the most 'troublesome' clients that the other girls will refuse to go through with, like Andrew. Tina is perfectly aware of the animosity of the other girls, (it is hard to miss it since they make very little attempt to disguise their dislike of Tina, often talking in deliberate 'stage whispers'). However, Tina often prefers to dismiss it. Tonight she was singled out for being 'unprofessional'. This was done in an indirect way. Penny mentioned that she had heard that someone at the parlour was performing unsafe services, such as kissing the client and allowing him to perform oral sex without a dental dam. Monique and Bibi were indicating with their eyes who they were talking about, in addition to the odd jibe directed at Tina.

The fifth portrays how the manager co-produces the performance of sex work in conjunction with the girls.

After 11pm clients began to come out of the woodwork. We had been entertaining ourselves/passing time since 6.30pm. Once the rush begins, the boredom, bitchiness instantly disappears and the place becomes a hive of activity. I never cease to admire how quickly the girls can turn the place from a smoke filled backstage dressing room into an inviting lounge/bar. Once the client alarm goes off (sensor) and I give the nod that the client is booking in, aerosols and perfume sprays are liberally applied and the contents of the table are whisked off into a corner and disguised by some carefully positioned cushions. At the same time, the girls apply lipstick, adjust dress and underwear, fluff hair and finally drape themselves over the bar or perch on a stool in a matter of minutes. The parlour lounge is then filled with chatter, laughter, the clink of glasses and pool balls and the clunk of the door through to the rooms. When the parlour is in full swing and Diane is on duty at the bar, I can sometimes steal time to myself in the office and watch over the scene, but this doesn't last too long as I have to mingle and keep check on the amount of time clients are sitting with the girls.
before going through or booking in, as well as monitor the room times and deal with inquiries and chat to clients who look nervous or are sitting on their own when the girls are busy. I often have to move in to help any clients who look a bit lost and ask them if they would like some help to choose a lady or ask a lady to take them through, and there are the clients who need some gentle prodding to go through.

Bibi was having a particularly hard time getting a client to go through tonight. He had been chatting with her for over half an hour, bought a couple of drinks and was booked in for a half hour massage. It looked like he was interested in Bibi as he had singled her out to talk to and bought her a drink. However, Bibi was getting agitated as she was missing out on potential business as more clients arrived. I noted the look in B's face and reckoned that it was time to 'step in'. I used my usual approach, and asked the client if he wanted to go through with Bibi now since I had just taken a telephone booking for Bibi for 12.30am. This can be a bit of a risky manoeuvre as some clients can get a little surly about being hurried along and will then chose another girl. Thus, I will only approach the client in this way if I sense that the girls want me to take action. I interpreted Bibi's 'look' as an invitation to do so. Fortunately in this case the client went straight through without any trouble or complaints. This was a bonus as we were starting to get quite busy and I needed B to be available.

The sixth extract portrays how the manager has to negotiate with and behalf of the workers.

Had my second red bull at 12.30am!! Andrew came in, booked an hour and ended up going through with Bibi. As per usual, when this time was finished, Bibi came out to say that Andrew was being surly and had asked for another girl and booked in for a further hour. We sent Tina through as she can usually manage Andrew. An hour later a happy Andrew emerged.

Diane left at 2am and I had to look after the bar for the rest of the shift. At one point I had four clients sitting around the bar (two hostess and
two booked). The ladies were all busy and just for the 20 minutes that the ladies were all busy, it just felt like I was running a local bar. The clients were chatting with each other, playing pool and shouting each other drinks. The atmosphere changed and the clients became a little more self-conscious and quiet when M appeared with her client. Monique took me aside when her client had gone and had a moan about not being knocked. I pointed out to her that I was not going to leave four clients alone in the bar to knock on the door of her room which happens to be in the remotest corner of the parlour and rather sarcastically suggested that she invest in a watch. (After saying this I thought how very much like Barbie I sounded. However, Monique has been, since the day I first started working at the parlour, at pains to try to counter me at every corner. She was not at all accepting of the fact that I had no practical experience of sex work. Thus, our relationship has been one that has needed a great deal of work and every now and then we will perhaps slip a little!).

Monique claimed that the client had been unable to climax during the half hour booking because he had a 'little too much to drink', but had insisted on trying for almost the duration of the massage session. The client had tried to carry on after time, claiming that he had paid for a service and hadn't as yet 'got' it. Monique said that she had explained to the client that he had paid for a half hour and if he wanted to continue he had to extend his time and pay me for another session. Monique also stated that she had no intention of letting him do that and have to suffer another half hour of futile 'banging' and face more complaints at the end of the session. So, she also tried to explain to the client that perhaps he should save his money and come back when he hadn't had quite so much to drink and suggested that perhaps alcohol was the reason for his 'problem'. Luckily this time the client agreed with Monique's suggestion. Last week, however I had to deal with an irate client complaining about the service and how he felt that he had been ripped off. He had paid for a 45 minute all-inclusive, during which time he had been unable to climax and was insisting to M that they should continue until he was able to. Monique had given the same explanation that she used this evening. Unfortunately it didn't work
and I ended up talking to the client when he came out of the room and quoted management policy in terms of the definitions for 'massage' and 'all-inclusive'. We ended up agreeing to disagree.

The seventh portrays how the manager has to deal with clients:

I was feeling rather tired by 3.00am and finding it difficult to muster the enthusiasm to answer the door. Chloe came out of a job around this time complaining that she had just had a 'straight' and that she had spent 20 minutes with him prior to going through and had massaged him for almost an hour, for which he had given her a $20 tip. She was furious when she found out how many clients had been in during this time.

At 4.00am I ended up turning away a group of four 'skin heads', and a couple of drunken 'out of town' rugby supporters. Explaining the 'too drunk' policy to drunk people can be extremely difficult and tedious! It is my decision who I allow in and who I don't and I try to be fairly consistent on my idea of 'too drunk' in order to set some sort of standard. One of the drunks that I turned away tonight began to get a little nasty as he swayed at the counter calling me a 'stuck up bitch', and spraying me with saliva in the process (what a wonderful job this is!). Luckily I have a physical barrier between myself and the clients in the form of a window that I can slide shut and lock it if need be. I must admit that it can be quite difficult to decide about the state of a client in the space of a minute or two in the early hours of the morning from my window at reception. I remember that last week a client who I thought was borderline but had allowed in, had in fact only consumed one drink but had just finished a 16 hour stint in the office and was extremely tired rather than extremely drunk!! However, most of the clients who come through the door after 10pm on a Friday night have been drinking alcohol and more than half of them noticeably so. The advice that Barbie gave to me in my interview regarding client admission to the parlour was "Don't let anyone in that you wouldn't consider going through with yourself". Well for me that would rule out just about everyone that came through the door! So, instead I have
learned through trial and error what 'acceptable drunkenness' entails for the girls. I have found that the guidelines will vary according to the amount of jobs each girl has done as well as how much money she needs that night and who is working the shift. In addition, the definition of 'too drunk' is perhaps more liberal in the parlour setting than, say, in a bar or night club. On Friday nights there are usually seven girls on the shift and at least two will be willing to deal with the obnoxious and almost incapacitated drunks. Nevertheless, the girls will either moan about drunk clients or complain that I'm turning away 'potential clients'.

The last extract portrays the manager monitoring the disciplining codes of fining and bonding.

I closed the front doors at 5.00am. There hadn't been any new arrivals for half an hour. Bibi still had half an hour to go with her booking. Chloe and Penny would be finished in 10 minutes. The girls began the clean-up, filling/emptying the dishwasher, stripping rooms, emptying ashtrays, the condom bin, and vacuuming the rooms etc. Monique took care of the laundry. However, there would be a nice big bundle left for the Saturday shift when Bibi, Chloe and Penny stripped their rooms. Oh well another reprimand next week from Barbie!

I had a few fines to collect, which was made easy by the fact that everyone had done at least two all-inclusives. Plus there were shift arrears to sort out too. It is amazing to see how much some of the women owe in fines and fee arrears, not to mention the paying off their bonds too. I had a quick flick through the book and noticed that Lisa had quite an impressive tally of fines, Rochelle as expected doesn't have any fines and Chloe owes a total of $115 for an assortment of misdemeanours which include, being late and leaving her room untidy (all of these had been given by Barbie). As yet, I haven't wielded the 'fine weapon' as I really can't see it being particularly effective since any fines that are imposed only end up getting added to a list of 'deductions' for each lady, rather than a lump sum payment.
When Bibi finally emerged, the others rallied around stripping her room, resetting and vacuuming it. Finally I gave out the all-inclusive monies and we made our way to the back door in the darkness. I can't quite understand the logic of having all the light switches in the office. By the time I had got to the back door and set the alarm, all the girls were in their cars. Penny had already gone off in her taxi and Chloe was still waiting for hers. The taxi arrived within a minute, which was our signal to depart. Once the last girl drove off I headed home. I glanced at my watch to see that it was 5.55am.

The preceding extracts illustrate that, as a form of participant observation, the manager as researcher was critical for my understanding of the organisation of work practices and relationships in the sex industry (Orr, 1996). Being positioned in this way allowed an insight into the backstage negotiations and relationships (Goffman, 1990) upon which the organisation of sex work is predicated. How work is understood and the practicalities of how it is to be carried out are never really made explicit by employers (Orr, 1990, 1996), but by performing the role of employer I was able to understand how the industry 'worked'. I discovered that, like sex workers, managers/receptionists are left to improvise on the job by piecing together shared and personal knowledge and experiences of sex work practice.

**Interviewing**

In addition to my operating as a manager/researcher, I also conducted interviews with a sample of sex workers from across three sex markets, massage parlour, private escort and phone sex16, as well as a number of managers, receptionists and clients from these markets, and others involved in the sex work industry as 'support people' (Becker, 1963). These included health workers, NZPC volunteers, detectives from the Christchurch Police, media representatives, bank representatives, taxi drivers. These interviews took place at the homes of participants or acquaintances, work places, NZPC drop-in centre, cafes, bars, my office at university, and on the telephone. The choice of location was left to the participant.

These interviews provided me with a different kind of knowledge than the knowledge associated with managing a massage parlour. I was able to treat issues in a more detailed way on a one-to-one basis in privacy. This allowed a way for me to deepen and 'layer' my

16 It is important to note here that these markets would often overlap, with workers moving across markets. On a number of occasions I interviewed the same worker as a representative from two markets.
observations as a manager, as well as confirm or validate my interpretations and preliminary analyses. The selection of interview participants was conducted through an informal network of contacts (snowballing) that I had established through working at two massage parlours in central Christchurch, social contacts from the NZPC, as well as referrals from interview participants and friends. In addition, I used the advertisements in the escort and adult entertainment columns in the Christchurch Press and the Wellington Dominion to contact some private escorts and phone sex operators. When the first point of contact was a newspaper advertisement, the participants were hearing about my research for the first time. Thus, I had to give a full explanation of my research and my background.

I use the term 'interview' to encompass pre-organised semi-structured face-to-face interviews, informal conversations that occurred spontaneously at social gatherings, and telephone interviews. The duration of most pre-organised interviews was an hour and a half, though some of the impromptu interviews would last a minimum of twenty minutes upwards. Occasionally, I was asked to consider material as "off the record", which I duly noted. This request came from participants in management positions in sex businesses or representatives from an official organisation or group. Often participants continued to talk for quite a while after we had concluded the formal interview and the tape recorder had

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17 Sampling as such was not wholly random for the study, rather participant selection was based upon my privileged position inside the field, enabling informativity. Sex workers and official representatives often came to me as I undertook my work within the sex industry. In turn, I was able to assemble connections/networks that drew me to sex workers and peripheral groups/actors.

18 In this case, I deliberately distanced myself from the NZPC since I had encountered some opposition to this organisation in previous contact with sex work personnel. Some sex workers indicated that they were not in favour of the current campaign for the decriminalisation of prostitution and expressed their concerns for a "legalised" industry in which they would be required to obtain licenses to operate and thereby lose their ability to operate anonymously.

19 The degree of interview structure altered in terms of participant, for example, representatives of organisations often had less flexibility in term of time, and therefore I needed to direct interviews a little more in order to address the pertinent issues.

20 In this case the participant was aware of my research and this 'interview' often constituted a lengthy conversation which was either tape recorded (I often took to carrying a tape recorder in my bag for recording field observations or ideas after I had broken my wrist), or these conversations were jotted on scraps of paper and later written up.

21 These were with phone sex operators, some of which operated from Wellington and Auckland on 0900 numbers.

22 I tape recorded 78 pre-organised interviews and took field notes for the impromptu interviews where a tape recorder was not available or not practical, and also for documenting comments derived from conversations at social gatherings such as NZPC evenings or 'down time' at the massage parlour. Thus, the number of taped interviews is not representative of the people who participated in the study. Three of the participants were interviewed twice with an interval of 3 years between each interview, and one participant was formally interviewed 4 times over a 5 year period. In this way I was able to follow worker mobility within and across markets and the attending issues that arose. Furthermore, these women were able to give valuable feedback on the ongoing analysis of my fieldwork and add to the supervision of the research project.
been switched off, and I became adept at taking discreet notes and/or memorising the key points that I would later record. These unrecorded conversations frequently yielded a number of relevant issues which I would later pick-up in the following interview.

For the most part the interviews were semi-structured or unstructured, in that I had themes and issues in which I was interested and articulated in the research questions. However, I was keen to generate dialogue in which the participants could respond to questions or prompts in their own terms or, indeed, generate their own themes of particular concern to them in their everyday lives. Accordingly, I would follow the participant's conversational path trusting that the issues they were raising were significant points in the construction of their working worlds. In my initial interviews I raised points from sex work literature or my own experience of the industry in order to break the ice and generate discussion, talking generally about organisational practices in different sex markets and so forth. As I progressed I was able to identify themes raised in earlier interviews or in my participant observation and would then raise them in subsequent interviews or conversations for clarification. The value of access to people's ideas, thoughts and memories in their own words cannot be underestimated in social research. Such dialogue is not generally generated through structured interviewing alone or through observation of an individual's actions alone. Through the combination of working in the industry and conversational semi-structured interviews I was able to introduce new questions as the interviews proceeded, to clarify issues and themes, and enable me to develop a range of questions appropriate to the different contexts, people, and narratives.

I avoided interviewing women that I was currently working with, and would only approach them once they had ceased to work at the massage parlour. I wanted to avoid compromising anyone that I worked with since I was unsure how other managers would react to workers talking to me and vice versa. Something that I learned from my experience working in the sex industry and which has been commented on by Sterk (1996), is that the precarious nature of sex work meant that trust had to be earned on a regular basis and could not be taken for granted, or in layman's terms "you need to watch your back!" (see McKeganey & Barnard, 1996; McNamara, 1996; Sterk, 1996).

23 These interviews generally were not tape recorded, I would take notes at the time if possible, or in the case of a social gathering I would record my notes on my way home.
I decided to continue working as a receptionist in a massage parlour for the duration of the thesis\textsuperscript{24}. In this way I have been able to document the changes that have occurred over the last five years in the sex work industry, particularly the recent law changes in New Zealand. Furthermore, this has enabled me to interview four women on numerous occasions over a period of five years, noting changes that had occurred over this time, both in terms of working patterns as well as their own personal stories. In addition, I maintained contact with friends I had established as a result of my research. These friends proved invaluable in providing me with the ability to observe, on a couple of occasion, the operations of a private escort and over time in many impromptu interviews and conversations.

**Interpretations: getting it all to make sense**

My way of working in the different field of writing was conventional. I used my interviews and my own participant research as a way of progressively finding out about the organisation of sex businesses and sex work. As my participation increased in the range of networks in the field and I undertook further interviews, my understanding of the industry increased. With each new interview I was able to push angles and probe issues that had developed from my understanding. It was only in the process of doing field work, reading, writing, analysing and theorising as simultaneous activities that I was able to name what I was doing through theoretical reflections and continuous encounters in worlds of sex markets.

The actual research process - from fieldwork to analysis to results to writing - overlapped. Throughout the time I have worked in massage parlours and conducted fieldwork and interviews, I was working through different analytical frameworks. My attempts at analysis began in the tradition of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), with generating themes and categories from interview transcripts and field notes that would become the focus of my thesis. My early attempts at theorising were descriptive and exploratory with ideas emerging slowly from the data as it was collected. Like others in this tradition, I identified patterns, themes, points of difference and contradictions in the action and talk surrounding the organisation and practice of sex work, in addition to exploring similarities across time and place and their sites of production and consumption. I considered how and what was said and compared this to my observations. I generated concepts, such as autonomy for example, through the words and actions of participants, within and spanning across diverse

\textsuperscript{24} Indeed, as I write this, I am a current employee at Dior's massage lounge in central Christchurch one day per week.
sex markets, thus noting the impact of places or locations, and interactions upon how they understood or constructed autonomy. Autonomy was, I discovered, a relative term deployed differently by different networks and in different situations.

From the early stages of interviewing and participant observation I made notes of words and phrases, of actions, and events which were emerging. For example, I would look for instances where 'time' was talked about or where ideas about being 'professional' were presented or reiterated. Repeatedly reading and re-reading and making notes on transcripts and field notes enabled me to immerse myself in the different field of writing. The categories into which the themes were reduced from the data were not pre-determined prior to analysis. They emerged from a process that Ezzy refers to as "open coding", which tends to involve considerable experimentation (2002: 88). I read through my data line by line making notes in the right hand margins of the transcripts and field notes and highlighting sections of corresponding text. As I began to read through these margin notations I constructed themes. I then went through the data again coding (labelling) these lines in the left hand margin. These new labels or codes could then be broken down again depending on the differences in the way that respondents talked about or were oriented towards the theme. I wrote lists of themes for each transcript and field note entry exploring any ideas, grouping categories and themes, making comparisons and differentiating between categories. Though it has been suggested that this approach to analysis may lead to new ways of understanding as new ideas are put together or participants' interpretations are seen in a new light (Ezzy, 2002), it was also confusing, frustrating, somewhat chaotic and time consuming (Orona, 1990)

In addition to re-reading and re-interpreting notes and transcripts and making thematic notes, I attempted to be more conscientious about theorising and making connections between concepts, particular instances or links between themes and markets. I looked for examples of instances or events that seemed to typify a concept, theme or oddities and the unexpected. While constructing thematic examples, I was also constructing differences within and between narratives where points of tension and contradiction lay, the use of different words to describe similar actions or activities or relationships, for example. I spent time concentrating on the content of the narratives, whether they were descriptions of events or narratives of personal life and identity. Thus, I began to focus on particular words and phrases. One example I can use here is the use of the word 'professional.' Having identified this as a key theme, I then was able to associate it with other words that were positioned as 'different' in the narratives, such as the notion of 'control'. Having
established these words in relation to each other within the logic of the narrative, I was able to consider how other terms such as 'autonomy' or 'boundaries' or 'time' were associated with them in one particular narrative and then extend this consideration to other narratives. In this way, I attempted to identify where particular clusters of words and phrases were associated with each other and how they were thematically connected and in what situations they were drawn upon. My continued participation in the sex work industry provided a means for clarifying/checking 'hunches' or connections I made from my analysis. Being known, I was always able to go back to some of my participants to confirm or check my interpretations.

On Reflection: lived through the field

Coffey (1999) suggests that we personalise field work through our analyses since we make decisions about the work we enter and as researchers we are responsible for discovering themes and patterns and deciding what goes where, what is significant and important, salient or typical. In my view, analysis relates to how we feel about the data, the field, the people and ourselves (Minichiello et al., 1996). Thus, analysis can not be thought of as systematic and prescriptive and devoid of any personal investment and emotional qualities (Coffey, 1999: 140). As Hastrup notes, the performative contradiction of ethnography is that objective scholarship is at odds with studying others by way of engagement (1995). My decision to take on paid work as manager forced me to live that fruitful contradiction.

There are risks and dilemmas thrown up by doing close ethnographic research with any group in which the researcher is essentially participating as part of the field. For example, one can become immersed in the intra-community and intra-agency politics, in addition to dealing with the power relationships inherent in collaborative research, and with issues pertaining to the positioning of the researcher in the field. Feminists often argue that participatory research is inherently problematic and results in an unequal researcher/participant relationship (Stacey, 1988). Sociological research, the way in which data is collected and interpreted in addition to academic protocol, implicitly constructs hierarchical opposition between the researcher as knower and the informants as those who are known about (Phibbs, 2001). However, it can be argued that when entering the field the researcher essentially becomes the student in order to begin to understand, observe and participate, and the participants therefore occupy the position of experts (see Agar, 1996; Phibbs, 2001; Punch, 1993).
In addition, the researcher can also encounter problems when establishing close friendships with informants. Indeed, the extent to which one is participating with an informant as a friend, as a manager, or participating and observing as a researcher, is a difficult boundary to manage, especially on a day to day basis. As other researchers have noted relations are always both informant and friend and the boundaries tend to shift and change over time (see Hobbs, 1993; Fountain, 1993; Phibbs, 2001; Sterk, 1996; McNamara, 1996; Naples, 1996). When I reflected on the ways in which I constructed information about others through the research process and of course in relation to my own interpretative modes of thinking, I concluded that no matter how collaborative the process, the responsibility for this ethnography lies with me. I would be the one to write up, interpret, make sense of and analyse my field notes. Though feminist ethnography promotes the reciprocal, sharing, trust-based relationships between researcher and informants, the reality is, as I discovered, often far from this ideal.

Researching marginalised, criminalised and stigmatised activities such as sex work presents the researcher with a number of additional ethical problems; for example, does the researcher become personally involved in criminal activities, or to what extent is one implicated by mere presence and does one’s presence condone such activities. Punch suggests that "ideally every field worker should be his or her own moralist" (1986: 73). This situationalist approach (see Van Maanen, 1983; Punch 1986) recognises that field work inevitably involves 'getting your hands dirty'. Norris (1993) further suggests that moral sensitivity and maturity can only occur through debate, dialogue and reflection and that researchers must become more aware and sensitive to the moral and ethical dimensions of their enterprise. It would not be possible to ignore the complex construction of a research role by following prescribed research codes and inviolable rules enshrined in a professional code of ethics. As I found from my own experience, the activities within the research field became part of my everyday life and the issue of their illegality, for instance, was replaced by organisational necessity and practicalities. Thus, ethical decisions have meaning only within the context in which they are made. The following extract from field notes illustrates such a point.

Colin and Dave (police) dropped in tonight (again on my shift). I showed them into the office and we had a general chat about how I was doing and Dave made the usual joke about wanting to read my study when I've turned it into a 'best seller'. I got out the register and gave it to Colin (I had finally convinced Fritz to fill in the entries on a regular
basis when he takes on new staff), then went to get the two new girls so Colin and Dave could have a chat with them. Normally, visits such as these don't bother me, but on this occasion I had Tyla working on this shift and she should not be working in a parlour at all since she has a drug (minor) conviction. Fritz was well aware of this when he took her on, and so didn't enter Tyla into the register, citing what he call **"the ridiculous nature of the law, prohibiting women from working in a massage parlour on the basis of a misdemeanour that happened over seven years ago"** as his justification. Nevertheless, Fritz was committing an offence according to the Massage Parlours Act 1978, and so was I for that matter. To make matters worse, Tyla had been working at a rival parlour prior to working for us and had left on bad terms. The owners of this parlour apparently (through the parlour grapevine) had threatened to tell the police of this situation. Whether this was true or not, I really wasn't keen to find out by having a confrontation on my shift. Tyla was due out of the room in five minutes and would head straight to the office/reception area to sign herself out on the shift sheet (close to where Colin and Dave were ensconced. I decided to intercept her while Colin and Dave were talking to Mandy and Simone.

On this occasion, and for that matter on the two other occasions that they had visited the parlour on my shift, Colin and Dave did not interfere with parlour business and were relatively low key with the visit. They asked how many girls were working, looked briefly around the lounge/bar area from the entrance and proceeded to the office with me. They could have quite easily asked to see all the girls on shift, checked the shift sheet and then checked the girls against the entries in the register. However, Colin commented that what they just wanted to ask the new girls to be alert to clients talking about child pornography or potential paedophiles. Nevertheless, I had taken the precaution, when I had seen them at the reception window, to place paperwork on top of the shift sheet to deter their prying eyes.

In this excerpt, which portrays the manager dealing with the police and colluding with workers, the complexities of doing research and doing work in the same field is probed.
What is revealed is how the ambiguous legal status of the work of both the sex workers and the police is 'managed' and orchestrated by the day to day practices of managers in the industry. This may be considered unethical but research is not only about 'getting into place' and 'making a world' by providing a plausible story for your presence (Goffman, 1989), it also involves opening yourself up to new and compromising experiences in ways that may make you vulnerable. At the same time, it involves exploiting any new opportunities that may arise, which in turn may leave your participants vulnerable. By being present and participating in the field, Hastrup claims that the ethnographer is actively engaged in the construction of the 'ethnographic reality' (1995: 16). Hastrup argues that merely being physically present in the field is not sufficient for identifying events and writing about real cultures, what is needed is a kind of participation, a process of 'becoming' whereby we become our own informants (1995: 21).

Similarly, Kondo talks about undergoing a 'recasting' of her sense of self as Japanese as a result of interactions between herself and her hosts. This 'new' Japanese self was added to rather than detached from her other selves (1990). However, her sense of 'being' and 'becoming' Japanese suppressed and challenged the way she had conceptualised her selfhood prior to her fieldwork. Her sense of self and identity can be seen to be mediated by the experiences and interactions of her fieldwork. Hastrup talks about this as an incomplete process in that the researcher does not become identical with the others in the field nor becomes completely absorbed in the other world, but rather gives into the 'alien reality' (1995: 19). Thus, my 'becoming' a massage parlour shift manager/receptionist challenged the way in which I conceptualised myself outside the massage parlour. For example, I was an advocate for the NZPC, supporting the call for the decriminalisation of the sex work industry and the very work policies that I was enforcing as a manager in the massage parlour. I was also a researcher, and an impoverished student using the income from the massage parlour towards my tuition and living costs.

Coffey suggests that this way of doing ethnographic research can problematise and force a reconceptualisation of the self, by going beyond the narrow confines of the fieldwork itself (1999). Similar to the experiences of Kondo (1990) and Hastrup (1995), I also found myself, at first, as something of a conceptual anomaly in the field. Though I was a woman and in a management role in a massage parlour, I lacked the competencies to fit in and function inconspicuously in this sex work market. What I call the 'cultural competencies' of how to act and behave - the various forms of interaction and engagement with clients,
workers and management - had to be observed and learned quickly at the beginning and reassessed and monitored throughout the course of my fieldwork. The following extract from my fieldnotes illustrates the initial gap in my knowledge of forms of behaviour and interaction required for the role of a manager in a massage parlour:

"Something that neither Sandra, Sue nor Barbie mentioned was how to talk to or manage the clientele. They spent the training time telling me about the tasks I had to perform in terms of controlling the girls and the practical day to day running of the business, like tills, cashing up, alarms, laundry and so forth, but they never went into what do you say on the phone? How do you talk about the services? What can you say and what can't you say? What are the markers for getting the client to go through? These are the things that I would know had I 'worked' before, things that are taken for granted as 'known' (implicit knowledge) and these are the things that I will have to learn by watching and listening to the ladies on my shifts ... (extract from field notes 21/5/97)

Thus, this process of 'going native' threatens to dissolve the opposition between subject and object and make the researcher simply another actor in the field. As Hastrup notes, the researcher's presence is the occasion and the locus of the drama. This drama is also the source of her reflection (Hastrup, 1995). On a daily basis I would encounter problems in the field as both a researcher and manager and have to deal with them as a necessary part of the experience of doing research and as a part of working in a massage parlour. Like many sex work personnel, I had to deal with conflicting and contradictory experiences that were part of the different worlds I inhabited. Unlike sex workers, I was also a sociologist whose task was to write up these experiences.

I feel the time has arrived to call it a day at Studio 14B, after all I have been here for over a year and a half. Recently, I have been trying to re-evaluate and redefine my roles in some attempt to make sense of the current conflicts and tensions that I am experiencing at work, in my research and in my personal life. I am unsure of where my boundaries are right now or who I am meant to be.
Recently, it has been difficult to clarify where the researcher is speaking and where the shift manager is speaking when I read through my notes. I often feel that I'm being split into many pieces and this leaves me feeling dishonest.

(Field notes 11/98)

My participation in the research field enabled me to gain a better understanding of how sex markets are structured, operate, and change, as well as how sex work practice is organised in particular contexts. As I have attempted to show, my immersion in the different field of 'writing up' was also experienced as a field of conflict and contradiction.
Appendix 1- Telecom Policies

Telecom
Telecom New Zealand Limited

0900 Service Code of Practice

Purpose

This Code of Practice defines agreements between Telecom and Information Providers. These agreements relate to legal, ethical and moral issues relating to the provision of the Information Providers' Services.

Terms defined in the Information Provider Agreement shall have the same meaning in the Code of Practice unless the context requires otherwise.

Information Provider Responsibilities

The undersigned Information Provider agrees to:

a. Submit all scripts and advertising through any medium relating to proposed Messages or existing Messages (as the case may be) of;

   1. A "Medical" or "Health" nature relating to matters of sexual practice or hygiene, or,
   2. Games, competitions, sales promotions or lotteries under the Gaming and Lotteries Act 1977 or otherwise, or,
   3. Any other category or class of Messages that Telecom may in its sole discretion require from time to time, to Telecom for its approval before they are made publicly available, and submit any proposed changes to any such previously-approved script or advertising to Telecom for its approval before the Message or advertising, so altered, is made publicly available

b. To comply with all reasonable conditions that Telecom may require to be fulfilled as part of the approval process referred to in paragraph (a).

c. Observe all the laws of New Zealand and, in particular, those that relate to the dissemination of information to the New Zealand public;

d. Answer any and all complaints to the Commerce Commission, the Department of Internal Affairs or any other Ministry, government department or governmental agency concerning: alleged violations of any Act or regulation, including: the Commerce Act 1986, the Fair Trading Act 1986, or the Gaming and Lotteries Act 1977 that result from the provision of the Information Provider's Service;
e. Follow ethical and moral standards in respect of the form and content of Messages which are representative of mainstream New Zealand, and, in particular, not disseminate pornographic or insulting or abusive material. Sexually explicit material is only permissible when it is presented in such a way that the clear intention is to inform rather than to entertain;

f. Not target children and disadvantaged groups;

g. Promptly answer all complaints from the New Zealand public about perceived breaches of public morality or ethical conduct that result from the provision of the Information Provider's Service or which allege a lack of value or quality of Messages;

h. Following recognized, standard ethical rules and practices set by the New Zealand advertising community or any recognized standards-setting body thereof when promoting information services;

i. Not advertise or promote any Service or Message in a tasteless or misleading manner or in such a way that is sexually explicit or suggestive (including, in relation to drawings or images, partial nudity) drawings, images or writing are used and, in any event, not advertise or promote any Service or Message of a "Medical" or "Health" nature relating to matters of sexual practice or hygiene in any printed or other media, be it visual or electronic, under any classification or listing such as Adult Entertainment or the like;

j. Do its best to ensure that Messages are always fully available to the general public;

k. The Messages must include the name of the company/business/individual offering the Service and a telephone number (which shall not be an 0900 number) to which any complaints regarding the Service or the Call may be made;

l. Include at the beginning of each Message a message of 10 seconds duration (which will be free to both Information Provider and Callers) which states:
   i. the cost of the Call per minute or per minute;
   ii. that children must ask their parents' permission before making the call;
   iii. that if Callers do not wish to incur any charges by continuing with the Call that they should immediately hang up;

m. All advertising relating to Information Provider's Services shall contain the particulars required in paragraph (k), sub paragraphs (i) and (ii) of paragraph (l). And in addition an address where written complaints may be made;

n. Fully recognize Telecom's right to refuse to continue to provide the Telecom 0900 Service in respect of any Messages and/or advertisements that in Telecom's sole opinion may jeopardize or injure the Network, Telecom 0900 Service or Telecom's reputation and image in the marketplace;

o. Provide information in a live format to only one Caller during that call and further agrees not to provide the ability for Callers to share information between themselves during that call. (i.e. the Information Provider agrees not to engage in "chat lines" or "group access bridging" services).
Telecom 0 9 0 0 GENERAL INFORMATION
Information worth paying for

0900 Facilities

An 0900 line enables a business to offer information or a service over the phone and receive payment via the cost of the call.

Types of lines
There are two ways of providing information over 0900 lines. They are:
- Pre-recorded format.
- Live format

Medium of delivery
Information can be delivered over 0900 lines using the following mediums:
- Voice
- Data
- Facsimile

Numbers
Callers wanting to hear information dial the 0900 code plus 5 digits. The various services available on 0900 numbers are restricted to the following prefixes:

- 0900 3XXXX pre-recorded 0900 7XXXX
- 09004XXXX pre-recorded 0900 8XXXX
- 09005XXXX live services 09009XXXX
- 09006XXXX games

Contract
Telecom are keen to maintain the standards of the 0900 service in New Zealand and require Information Providers to comply with a contract and a Code of Practice. These two documents basically cover the content and quality of the information. The main requirements are:
- Pornography is not allowed
- Chat-lines are not allowed
- Selling product over 0900 is not allowed
- 0900 lines should not target children, disadvantaged groups, or those not responsible for paying for the call.

Examples
"Welcome to ABC company. This call costs $0.99 per minute including GST. Children please ask your parents first. Hang up now and you won't be charged."
BILLING

Billing Procedure
Telecom collect the revenue from 0900 calls via the standard account. The caller pays the telephone account, Telecom deduct the relevant per minute charge and then passes on the remaining monies to the Information provider.

Where customers do not pay 0900 calls or refuse to pay. Telecom will apply their normal credit procedures. However, any bad debts are ultimately the responsibility of the Information Provider.

Alternative billing options
The service also enables you to choose between two other charging options:
- Fixed rate billing lets you charge a set fee per call, so regardless of the length of the call, the caller will pay a fixed rate. The charges for this billing option are $35 to set up and $5 monthly thereafter.
- Differentiated billing enables you to charge a caller different rates per minute within the call. The charges for this billing option are $35 to set monthly.

PRICING
Information Providers determine the value of their information to the caller. The charge per call can be up to $10 per minute including GST with a maximum of $50 per call including GST.
- 0900 number connection $55
- 0900 number rental $20.83/month
- Call charges (billed to the nearest full minute)
  - pre-recorded information 45 cents
  - live services 45 cents
- Changes, additions, deletions to an 0900 number, name of service, or price $35

EQUIPMENT
Audiotex equipment
Audiotex is the equipment which digitally stores voice recorded information and can be used by Information Providers to deliver pre-recorded information.
The following charges apply:
- Development charge per mailbox $55
- Rental per mailbox $35/month
- Establishment of menu driven systems $55
- Access charge $5 cents/min
- Charge to alter each mailbox $35
(This covers each configuration, number access and password change)
(NB: All prices exclude GST unless stated otherwise)
## Appendix II - Shift Sheet

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<th>Massage time</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Room No</th>
<th>Time In</th>
<th>Time Out</th>
<th>Cash</th>
<th>Eftpos C/C</th>
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### Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Cash</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Eftpos</td>
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<td>C/C</td>
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<td>Total for Shift</td>
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<td>Payments</td>
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Appendix III

Massage Time

- Ladies are expected to entertain their clients for the entirety of time that they have paid for

Tips

- Tips from clients must be consistent according to management expectations
- Girls must not overcharge or Dior’s will terminate their contract

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day Charges</th>
<th>Night Charges</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/2 hr massage</td>
<td>$30.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/4 hr massage</td>
<td>$40.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 hr massage</td>
<td>$50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2 hr massage</td>
<td>$35.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/4 hr massage</td>
<td>$45.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 hr massage</td>
<td>$55.00</td>
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</table>

All-Inclusive Charges

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Night</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/2 hour</td>
<td>$110.00</td>
<td>80/30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/4 hour</td>
<td>$125.00</td>
<td>85/40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 hour</td>
<td>$140.00</td>
<td>90/50</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Eftpos will be paid each Monday*

Queries or Concerns?

- Contact the receptionist, she is there to help you as well as attend to the general running of the massage parlour

Remember:

- Clients are very special and we are in a extremely competitive business. We encourage all our staff to treat every client with special attention.
- It is in everyone’s best interest if clients return regularly
- The client is always right even when he is wrong
CONSENT FORM

Discipline, Autonomy and Ambiguity: Organisations, Markets and Work in the Sex Industry in Christchurch, New Zealand

I have read and understood the description of the above-named project. On this basis, I agree to participate as a subject in the project; and I consent to publication of the results of the project with the understanding that anonymity will be preserved. I understand also that I may at any time withdraw from the project.

Signed.................................................................................................

...

Date.................................................................
Appendix V - Information Sheet

University of Canterbury Department of Sociology

Research Information

You are invited to participate as a subject in a research project which will examine the formal and informal controls of New Zealand's sex work industry. The project will address how these controls shape the current organisation and structure of the sex work industry and explore the implications for sex work practice and individual sex workers.

Your participation in this project will involve an informal interview at a mutually agreed location. The interview will be expected to last 1-2 hours.

As a follow-up to this research, you may be asked to participate in a second interview/meeting to discuss further issues not sufficiently covered or which emerged from the first interview and to give you the opportunity to alter details or add information.

The results of the project may be published, but you can be assured of complete confidentiality of data gathered in this investigation: the identity of participants will not be made public without their consent. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, pseudonyms will be used on tapes and notes.

The project has been approved by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee.

If you have any concerns about your participation in the project, please contact:

María Pérez-y-Pérez on 3642987 ext 7185
References


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Harrison, B., & Stina Lyon, E. (1993). A Note on Ethical Issues in the Use of


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