Prostitution as a Business

Research by Steven Zhou & Dr. Ben Postlethwaite
Summer 2013
Here's a single bean. It's your very first day.
over 75,000 hours of work in your lifetime

We will be at work, hopefully doing something satisfying for the equivalent of 3,202 of those days.
over 75,000 hours of work in your lifetime

“Dirty Work”: tasks and occupations that are likely to be perceived as disgusting or degrading (Hughes 1951)

We will be at work, hopefully doing something satisfying for the equivalent of 3,202 of those days.
SEX WORKER
PROSTITUTE
Red Light District
Deviant Forms of Capital

Four Forms of Capital (Hakim 2010)

Six Elements:

Beauty, Sexual Attractiveness, Social Ability, Liveliness, Social Presentation, and Sexuality
Deviant Forms of Capital

Hamermesh & Biddle (1993): good-looks earn 1-13% more
Reynolds (1986): FSW gross income over $20 billion USD per year
Ding & Ying Ho (2013): Chinese FSW earns five times average wage
The Training of House Prostitutes (Heyl 1977)

“Such sharing of [defense] tactics allows the turn-out to learn … ‘patterns of client management’ (548).

“In some ways these guidelines resemble a beginning course in salesmanship” (551).

“That is, she would defend hustling in terms familiar to the businessman or sales manager” (550).

FSW Negotiation Techniques (Portus 2012)

“What appears to emerge in the negotiation … between a streetwalker and her customer is similar to a market transaction. The objective of the model is to sell – in this case, the body or various forms of sexual service. As in any other commercial transaction, there is haggling, deception, mutual satisfaction, and appeal to emotions” (16).
Negotiation Tactics
Negotiation Tactics

Client Wants
- spend less
- pleasurable experience unhindered by condoms
- long length of stay

Compromise
- fair price
- use of contraceptives
- less time for more safety, or more time for more $

FSW Wants
- earn more
- safety from disease and pregnancy
- short length of stay
Eight primary negotiation tactics:

assertiveness, ingratiation, rationality, sanctions, exchange, upward appeals, blocking, and coalitions

Nine primary FSW negotiation tactics:

reward, emotional coercion, risk information, seduction, deception, withholding sex, relationship conceptualizing, autocracy, and direct request
The Prostitute as an Entrepreneur (?)

The Entrepreneur (Boyette 1966, Shane & Venkataraman 2000)

1) Personality and characteristics
2) Ability to evaluate environment
3) Ability to develop and manage innovation

An individual who is able to find, create, and exploit the value of previously unvalued goods or services.
Prostitution Turnover

Transferable Skills:

- Identifying forms of capital
- Training to use capital
- Negotiating exchanges

Possible Occupations:

street vendors, salespeople, marketing, business-related fields
Occupational Ambivalence

Normalizing Tactics (Ashforth, Kreiner, Clark, and Fugate 2007)

**Reframing**
- personal injury lawyer: “Without us manufacturers won’t be held responsible for defective products”
- FSW: “Without us men would go rape many more girls”

**Avoidance**
- abortion clinic worker: “I usually tell people I work in women’s healthcare”
- FSW: “I work in the entertainment business”

**Social Comparison**
- animal researchers: “We’re using animals for research, but at least not for product testing … that’s terrible”
- FSW: “At least I don’t strip down to complete nudity like some do”
Occupational Ambivalence

**SIT (Iost & Banaji 1994)**
identification with occupation and confrontation with opposition

**SIT (Taifel & Turner 1986)**
setting oneself apart from others in the occupation

“Because stigmatized workers are experiencing pulls in different directions – identification resulting from SIT-related processes, but disidentification resulting from SJT-related processes – we suggest that strong ambivalence is a likely outcome” (628).
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