Welcome to the 3rd UK Sex Work Research Hub Newsletter which, in the sharing tradition of the SWRH, is brought to you by Debbie Jones, Jordan Dawson, Tracey Sagar and Marije Van Stempvoort - the Swansea University team. We are delighted to edit this issue of the newsletter and have been overwhelmed by the number of articles sent by Hub members for inclusion. We would like to thank Raven for her continued support with putting together the newsletter and hope that we have continued the great standard she set with the previous editions.

We hope you enjoy reading about the research, community activities and events related to sex work in the UK and beyond generated by the incredibly active SWRH members. The next edition (due Spring 2017) will be edited by Dr Mary Laing (Northumbria University) and Dr Nicky Smith (University of Birmingham).

So from a very sunny Swansea, happy reading everyone!!

Breaking News


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A day in York. Summary of the ‘Sex Work Research Hub (SWRH) Symposium’

by Marco Bacio (University of Milan / Lund University)

On Wednesday 14th September 2016, the sun shone both inside and outside the Department of Sociology at University of York, where Professor Maggie O’Neill, Dr Kate Brown and Raven Bowen hosted ‘A Symposium on Sex Work, De-criminalization and Social Justice’ for the Sex Work Research Hub (SWRH). At least forty people attended this successful event, coming from different parts of the UK, stretching from north in Scotland to south in London, but also coming from abroad (as far as New Zealand or as close as Sweden). All the participants were there to share not only their knowledge around sex work and sex workers but also their very own solidarity towards the people who work in the sex industry.

After the opening speeches, it was Professor Gillian Abel (University of Otago) who started the symposium with a deep and interesting talk about New Zealand and the decriminalisation law of 2003. Professor Abel started with the public health concept of protecting and promoting health for the people of NZ, then she moved to the debate that inspired the law and that had begun several years before. The quotes from the Members of Parliament of NZ were very interesting and highlighted the different orientation and ideas around what being a sex worker means. After a very tight vote in the Parliament, the 2003 law shows its effectiveness in several legal cases in courthouses (especially clauses 16, 17, and 18). It is surprising to discover that the full and complete decriminalisation of sex work only exists in NZ and in one state of Australia (New South Wales).

As usual, the lunch break gave the opportunity to all participants to talk and socialise. In the afternoon, the large roundtable provided an enormous amount of information about sex work researches and activism in the UK. Professor Teela Sanders (University of Leicester) and Matt-at-Lotus of Beyond the Gaze updated the audience about this huge and important project of sex work and internet. Professor Sanders highlighted the fact that internet created new types of services involving no real contact between sex workers and their clients. Sex workers use the internet increasingly, but in different ways compared to the past. Nowadays, it is not unusual to find sex workers also on social networks. The negative side of these aspects is the rise of crime against sex workers through the internet (such as hacking and doxing). Matt-at-Lotus also added that sex workers use technologies to fight back against harassment and in his work he still faces misunderstanding about sex work.

Dr Rosie Campbell, OBE (University of Leicester) and Dr Kate Brown (University of York) talked about the managed area for street sex workers in Leeds. Even if this managed area is a success, especially in order to guarantee safety for women and (some) men working on the streets, media coverage of this area is full of stereotypes on sex work especially after the death of a female sex worker in December 2015. But the data, shown by both Rosie and Kate, tell us a different story: more sex workers reported cases of violence to the police and the offenders are found and incarcerated more easily.
Debbie Jones (Swansea University) presented ‘The Student Sex Workers’ project. There are many students involved in the sex industry, and male students have the same chances to enter the industry as female students. Once again, the degree of misunderstanding is very high. Staff in universities do not know what is legal and what is illegal about sex work according to the UK law. The project aims to promote learning about the rights and needs of these students, that often suffer unequal treatment.

Cari Mitchell (English Collective of Prostitutes – ECP) spoke about the history of the collective, that started in 1975. The ECP helps sex workers in different ways: from sex workers’ safety to letting them know their own rights, from advocacy to fighting for de-criminalising sex work.

Stewart Cunningham (Scotland PEP) presented the on-going process in the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh of the decriminalization bill. The process has been long and very difficult. Of course, trying to bring the NZ model into Scotland is not that easy, but huge steps have been taken by ScotPEP.

Alex Feis-Bryce (National Ugly Mugs – UKNSWP) talked about the Home Affairs Select Committee third report about ‘prostitution’ and the related case of his former Chairman Keith Vaz, MP. Following these stories was very interesting but it was also very sad to see how ignored the voices of sex workers and sex work researches are when policy and politics are involved.

The closure of the symposium was dedicated to Professor Nick Mai (Kingston University, London) and his last film ‘Travel’ (please see the article of Scarlett Redman for more information). I would just like to add that Professor Mai just won a ERC Consolidator grant of 1.6 million Euros for his project SEXHUM – Sexual Humanitarianism: migration, sex work and trafficking. Well done Nick and good luck with this project!

All participants thanked Raven Bowen (University of York) for the wonderful organization of the symposium, as the whole day was absolutely perfect.

The following day I flew back to Stockholm, but in my mind I still had the images and words of the York’s Symposium, because what was offered from Professor O’Neill and the SWRH to the participants was remarkable - something that is missing in both Italy and Sweden, where I live. This was the second time I attended an event held by the Hub, and I am really looking forward to the next one in order to share more knowledge about sex work researches but also to meet again all the fantastic people fighting for sex workers’ rights.

For more details of the symposium please see: https://storify.com/Therook_2017/swrh-a-symposium-on-sex-work-de-criminalization-an
Review of ‘Travel’ - A film by Nic Mai

By Scarlett Redman

Nic Mai’s latest film ‘Travel’ presents a beautifully nuanced exploration of migrant sex worker, Joy, who has travelled from Nigeria to France. In the opening scenes, Joy is amongst a group of ladies jovially jesting with each other on the street. Enter Nic, the researcher, who assures them he is ‘not police’, capturing the struggles we all face when trying to communicate our research aim, without killing participants with boredom first. The scene concludes with Nic’s departure and a self-deprecating nod as the women mock him in Nigerian.

Joy works on the street under the guidance of ‘Ma’ and has her ‘travel’ debt to pay. As this relationship deteriorates, we see Joy excluded from the workers’ van and she later begs to be let back in. Ma duly ups her debt amount. The film charts the struggles Joy faces in her quest to get ‘papers’: an increasingly abusive relationship with Ma; struggles with her homeland traditions of Ayelala and Juju set against the pressures to earn money, and finally a plea for a doctor to the repetition of ‘I am sick’.

Throughout the film we engage with the multiple identities of Joy – as a worker, a daughter, a shopper, an escapee. Realistic representations of her fluctuating autonomy are both uncomfortable and evocative and this discomfort extends to when Joy is finally granted her desired papers. She is free. Cue Joy now cleaning the rooms of a hotel, her lethargy evident. But this is not the end of the yellow brick road and the film concludes with Joy returning to work on the streets, albeit under happier, less exploitative circumstances.

The film is presented in split screen, with frequent reminders of the research process as we see Nic and the non-professional actresses discussing the next sequence in the film. For me, the split screen offered some subtle symbolism: as the film begins, Nic’s presence is ‘added’ to the screen, and as the film concludes, his presence is deleted from the scene. Reminders, perhaps, of the fleeting research presence set against the backdrop of enduring lives; we research and then we are gone.

Nic eruditely fielded questions afterwards, offering further insight into the filmmaking process. Depictions of darkness throughout reflect the literal reality of working life for Joy, just as the four different women who play Joy symbolise the many Joy’s her story represents. The complexities of exploitation are intricate, with Joy only deeming herself to be trafficked once Ma tries to extract more than the agreed fee from her.

‘Travel’ was received very positively by the participants on which it was based – sentiments repeated and vocalised by academics treated to the viewing at the close of the York decriminalisation conference. Nic’s film incites a sense of disquiet, of thoughtfulness, and was the perfect end to a highly informative and stimulating day.

The film trailer can be found at the following address: https://vimeo.com/user3467382
Sex Work Awareness Training: Acknowledging and Reducing Harm

Debbie Jones & Tracey Sagar, Swansea University have been commissioned by Welsh Government to deliver a series of training days on Sex Work Awareness Training: Acknowledging and Reducing Harm. The design and delivery of the training has been produced in collaboration with sex workers and statutory and third sector agencies, including NUMs, Safer Wales, StreetLIfe, Gwent Police and Cardiff Council. This pan Wales project aims to:

- Identify what sex work is
- Provide a basic awareness of the law in England and Wales
- Consider sex work through a bio/psycho/social lens
- Explore some of the harms often associated with sex work - for example:
  - Substance Misuse
  - Violence and Sexual Violence
  - Physical, Mental and Sexual Health
- Make sex workers safer through engagement with National Ugly Mugs
- Help agencies to ask the question – Are you a sex worker?
- Consider what/how to develop a multi-agency action plan

The team are thrilled to announce that all the courses offered are now full and in total we will have delivered training to over 280 individuals from statutory and other organisations.

Indoor Sex Work Research

By Billie Lister

Billie Lister was awarded a small Early Career Grant in order to conduct research into the indoor sex industry in major English cities. Her research aims to decipher not only whether workers in the indoor sector want decriminalisation, but also what exactly this would look like in reality. The impetus for the project arose from the call from the Home Affairs Select Committee who requested more research by conducted into the indoor sector. Key gatekeepers point to a number of key issues which have not been addressed in enough depth thus far, therefore the research project hopes to uncover more information regarding the impacts of the current state of play and crucially, what the indoor sector want from any legislative change.

The project promotion is currently in development however the Twitter handle will be @indoorsexwork A website will launch properly by the end of October, and Billie would be very grateful for any help hub members could give with regards to spreading the word. Billie is also looking to exchange links with other sex work research projects and sex work orientated orgs so drop her a line if you fancy exchanging at b.m.lister@leedsbeckett.ac.uk
21 Questions

By Raven Bowen

Welcome to 21 questions, a column that highlights members of the UK Sex Work Research Hub. We will get to know our community of sex workers, clients, managers/third parties, researchers, writers, theorists, activists, performers and agitators! Interviews are timed and participants are encouraged to say the first thing that comes to mind.

In this issue, 21 questions comes from Hannah

1. So Hannah, what do you do? I’m an escort and I have been since I was 19. I enjoy it most of the time. I learn a lot off my clients and I hate some of them. I travel about to people’s houses and some of them I allow them to come to my house.

2. Favourite Colour? To wear is black because it makes you look slim all of the time but yellow just makes me feel really good it’s that bright, bright colour. Never together to go for the bumble bee look? No (laughter) I never put them together actually!

3. One thing you’re most proud of? I’m proud of getting off drugs and proud of being self-employed. I’m competent at managing myself and obviously I can work when I want and when I don’t want. I don’t have to obey anybody, I obey myself and make my own choices.

4. Why the sex industry? When I got off drugs, which was hard drugs, I had a desire for money I suppose, earning money because I’d been shoplifting. And I moved out of an area and it was something that was suggesting to me and I started doing the escorting and I was addicted there and then. I never did escorting when I was on drugs, it was when I got clean I had a big hole and a gap in my life and it was suggested about escorting and I did it and I was instantly addicted because I straight away came out with that money and I felt incredible and I continued and maybe it was a control thing or maybe I swapped my addiction for drugs for money and but it empowered me and it blends with my entrepreneurial desire and it empowered me.

5. The last thing you laughed about? Yesterday when I was in the voting ballot box [Brexit Vote June 23, 2016) and somebody brought their dog in and said that it was called Boris! Was it a wild haired dog? It did have wild hair and we said he could come in and vote!

6. Your favourite food? My favourite food is prawns and seafood, although I’m trying to come off it because of the cruelty aspect. So big dilemma. So I’m a pescatarian at the moment. I do love fish, particularly prawns.


8. Biggest regret? Biggest regret is not saving money and banking it into the system earlier on in my life and that came from the fear of being a sex worker and banking my money. Because you feared that it would get seized? Yeah you don’t want to go in to the bank…you don’t know what to say. Eventually I learned but if I had done that in my 20s I would be a multi-millionairess.

9. Facebook of Twitter? Neither, I don’t like any of it but for my new business it will be both. Personally no, and I think Facebook’s actually very damaging. A friend just got off of it and she was just saying that she was so addicted to putting pictures of herself up every day and it controlled her life. Luckily I haven’t been able to be on it because of being a sex worker. People could see you on it and try to create trouble for you.

10. What challenges you the most about your sex work-related activities? I want to please each client and the biggest challenge for me is shy clients and quiet ones. Everything else is easy, getting apartments to work from, getting my clothes, managing my diary that’s all easy. I love clients who are very responsive and the counselling and everything else I do but the ones who are shy who I want to reach out to but they have so many barriers, that’s hard for me. They can be so distrusting and I want to help them and I want to connect with them.

11. Favourite movie? Midnight Express where the guy gets caught with the weed in Turkey. It’s a true story and it’s awful and it’s about him in prison in Turkey and he gets put in this mental institution and there’s a scene where his wife comes to visit him after 3 years and it’s done very raw…
21 Questions Continued

12. Last time you cried? Not long ago because I just had a baby and it was about animal cruelty.

13. Dog or cat person? Dog, I don't trust cats! And they're scratchy!

14. Who understands you? I suppose my husband and academics and that's about it...strangers. You know when you smile at a stranger and you know that they understand that smile and they've appreciated it and they give you one back or they've given you one first. I would say that more than sometimes my family or friends. Just in that moment, it's so bloody powerful and it's an amazing connection. Apart from if it's a guy and he comes running backward going 'can I have your number?' and you're like for 'fuck sakes mate I was just being fucking nice now do one!'

15. Last book or article you read? 'Ask and it is Given: learning to manifest your desires' by Esther and Jerry Hicks

16. Childhood fear? That a crocodile was going to bite my bum in bed. I had to wear pants because I was convinced that I would get bitten. And death, I contemplated it a lot when I was a kid.

17. What did your last text say? 'I'm sorry for being a twat' because I shouted at my partner today.

18. One thing that your work is aimed to do for the sex industry? Just to help other workers to realize how they can do this as a business, not to feel shame about it and not to listen to other people, listen to yourself and to be strong with it.

19. Meaning of life in one word? Kindness

20. The last thing you Googled? Esther Hicks

21. What did/do you want to be when you grow up? When I was a kid I wanted to be a vet

Recent/Upcoming Projects, Conferences, Blogs and Events

♦ The 5th Postgraduate sex work conference will be held at the University of Leicester on Friday 20th January. Contact Professor Teela Sanders: tims1@le.ac.uk by 30th November with a 250 word abstract and a short biographical note, more details can be found at: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/5th-annual-postgrad-sex-work-research-conference-university-of-leicester-tickets-27927020470

♦ Given the recent proposals by the NPCC, Welsh Government have funded Debbie Jones and Tracey Sagar to facilitate a one day conference which will focus on the Regulation of Sex Work. The conference which is co-hosted by the Consortium for Sexuality Studies, Swansea University, consortium-sexual-studies.swan.ac.uk and the Sex Work Research Hub (add in their link) is scheduled for Wednesday the 22nd of February 2017 at Swansea University. Confirmed key speakers include: Dr Rosie Campbell, Professor Tracey Sagar, Alex Feis-Bryce CEO National Ugly Mugs. Further details to follow but if you have any questions please contact Debbie at Deborah.a.jones@swansea.ac.uk

♦ Associate Professor Paul Maginn, Dr Emily Cooper and Dr Erin Sanders-Mcdonagh will be hosting special sessions at the Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting in Boston in April 2017 - entitled (De)Stigmatising Sexscapes: Politics, Policy and Performance. For more information, please go to https://ecooper2site.wordpress.com/2016/08/19/cfp-aag2017-destigmatising-sexscapes-politics-policy-and-performance/

♦ Dr Nick Mai’s new ERC project ‘SEXHUM: Migration, Sex Work and Trafficking’ began on the 1st October, and can be found at the following: https://sexualhumanitarianism.wordpress.com/
Home Affairs Select Committee

By Alex Feis-Bryce, CEO of National Ugly Mugs and ex political adviser in Parliament

Sex workers, practitioners and academics rejoiced when the Home Affairs Select Committee (HASC) Prostitution Inquiry’s interim report seemed to ignore its own terms of reference and debunk of the pervasive myths about sex work perpetuated particularly by those campaigning for the introduction of the Swedish Model. The HASC report was perhaps the most evidence based piece on sex work to ever emerge from any Parliamentary or Government body and while the Government aren’t obliged to actually implement Select Committee proposals they are obliged to consider them and respond.

As well as directly debunking some of the oft repeated dodgy stats the report called for the decriminalisation of sex workers themselves, including laws which prohibit them from working together for safety, and the wiping of any criminal records they may have relating to their work. There wasn’t much on other legal models and the impact they would have if introduced in the UK but they did give a sign of their early impressions and a desire to further examine the evidence to make recommendations in the final report. On decriminalisation, the legal model favoured by the overwhelming majority of sex workers, practitioners and researchers in the field, the report stated:

“We received evidence that the model of decriminalisation implemented in New Zealand has worked successfully. Research suggests that it has resulted in a number of benefits, including a clear policy message, better conditions for sex workers, improved cooperation between sex workers and the police, and no detectable increase in the size of the sex industry or exploitation of sex workers.”

And, on the Swedish Model, it stated:

“There are indications that the law can be misused to harass and victimise sex workers, who are the very people whom the law is seeking to protect. We are not yet persuaded that the sex buyer law is effective in reducing, rather than simply displacing, demand for prostitution, or in helping the police to tackle the crime and exploitation associated with the sex industry.”

As sex worker rights campaigners have come to expect, it’s never plain sailing in this area of advocacy. Not long after the interim report was published, in what appears to be too much of a coincidence, the influential HASC Chair Keith Vaz MP was caught in a tabloid sting involving male sex workers. This led to outrage from radical feminist anti-sex work campaigners who had largely been quiet about the interim report because its main proposals, decriminalising sex workers themselves, were reforms they claim to support. According to them, the whole inquiry was biased and should be scrapped. The suggestion was that a man who pays for sex shouldn’t be involved in an inquiry into the legislation around sex work. I wonder if they’d apply this logic to other areas? Should a politician of pension age be excluded from discussions about benefits for OAPs or a female politician be asked to sit out of debates on maternity leave? In the debate over the potential criminalisation of psychoactive substances, self-confessed popper enthusiast, Tory MP Crispin Blunt, provided the most useful and insightful contributions to the debate.

So, are the anti-sex worker rights campaigners correct in their assertion that the HASC Inquire was biased? We only need to remind ourselves of the terms of reference, the first cohort of people called to give oral evidence and the questions asked by the MPs to see just how biased the inquiry was from offset. Many of us were outrage that in just a few paragraphs the terms of reference conflated sex work and trafficking, defined all sex work as violence against women and stated that its aim was to assess “whether the balance in the burden of criminality should shift to those who pay for sex rather than those who sell it” rather than simply examining the laws around sex work. These terms of reference were written by Evangelical Christian MP David Burrowes who proposed the inquiry and stated from the start:

“I am pleased that the HASC has agreed with my request for an inquiry into prostitution. I also view prostitution as violence and commodification of women. I will be interested to see whether evidence before the Committee confirms my view.”
Continued

So, there is absolutely no doubt that the HASC Inquiry was biased but not against the radical feminist position, in favour of it. They did what any good inquiry should do: take heed of the oral and written submissions, put aside their bias and moral views and draw conclusions based on the evidence. In doing so, they reached the only sensible verdict: criminalising sex workers or their clients only serves to further marginalise an already marginalised group.

The outcome of the report was a victory of evidence over ideology and a testament to all those who submitted evidence to the committee. Our own submission to the inquiry was based on a survey of over 220 sex workers and over 50 frontline support services. We asked them what their preferred legal model was and, unsurprisingly, the vast majority of both categories supported decriminalisation. Interestingly, the Swedish Model was the leastfavoured of all options, including the contradictory mess we currently have in the UK.

The future of the HASC Prostitution Inquiry is unclear. There are three candidates to replace Vaz as Chair (Yvette Cooper, Chuka Umunna and Caroline Flint) none of which seem likely to ever support the decriminalisation of sex work. So, the Inquiry could be scrapped or, even worse, we could be faced with a final report which seems more in line with the biased terms of reference of the Inquiry than their interim report. We must be vocal and vigilante and join sex workers in fighting to prevent this from happening.

Congratulations

♦ Congratulations to Dr. Rosie Campbell on receiving her PhD!

♦ The Student Sex Work Project has been nominated for a Research & Innovation award for Using research as art towards inclusion, understanding and social change! Debbie Jones has also been nominated for the Rising Star in research award! For more, go to: [http://www.swansea.ac.uk/research/impact/iaa/researchandinnovationawards2016/](http://www.swansea.ac.uk/research/impact/iaa/researchandinnovationawards2016/)


New and Forthcoming Publications

Publications:


♦ Grenfell P, Eastham J, Perry G, Platt L (2016). ‘Decriminalising sex work in the UK.’ BMJ. 354. i4459 doi: [http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmj.i4459](http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmj.i4459)


♦ Paul Maginn, Emily Cooper and Martin Zabracki have been awarded a book contract with Palgrave Macmillan. The book is provisionally titled ‘Navigating Contemporary Sex Work: Gender, Justice and Policy’
After Keith Vaz: why the Home Affairs Select Committee’s prostitution inquiry must continue

By Mary Laing, Northumbria University

Keith Vaz stood down on September 6 as chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee after an article in the Sunday Mirror claimed he’d paid two male escorts for sex – Vaz said that he would refer the allegations to his solicitor.

I wouldn’t usually care about the sex lives of our MPs but when this happened, Vaz was chairing an inquiry by the committee on prostitution. His alleged actions caused uproar from both liberal and radical feminists and questions have been asked about where the inquiry should go from here.

Launched in January, the inquiry published its interim report in July. It caused quite a stir. Its terms of reference included examining if criminal sanction should continue to apply more to sex workers than clients – essentially whether the purchase of sex should be criminalised. It also set out to examine the implications of the Crown Prosecution Service’s recognition of prostitution as “violence against women” and the impacts of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 on trafficking.

Alongside this it is examining whether legal reforms are needed to assist services helping sex workers leave the sex industry, if people should be discouraged from purchasing of sex, and whether the ways in which “exploiters” are held to account could be increased. Some argued the terms of reference were biased towards criminalising the purchase of sex, and the so-called “Nordic Model” under which purchasing sex is illegal.

A much-needed inquiry

The inquiry is crucial in England and Wales because of the mess of current laws regulating the sex industry. For example, it is legal for consenting, individual adults to exchange sex for pay in a private, non-public space. Yet, it is not legal for sex workers to operate together indoors, which despite being one of the safer ways to work, potentially carries some of the heaviest criminal sanctions. Soliciting the purchase of sex in public is an offence, as is loitering or soliciting for the purpose of prostitution, meaning some of the most marginalised sex workers are criminalised. It is illegal to pay for the services of a “prostitute subject to force” and there are a host of sanctions against violence, coercion and trafficking.

The committee received over 250 written submissions and also took verbal testimony. As a self-confessed sex work policy geek (during my PhD in 2006 I could quote sections of Home Office prostitution policy by heart) I contributed to several written submissions. I also did a survey with National Ugly Mugs, a national organisation seeking to prevent violence against sex workers, asking members about their views on what the inquiry was investigating.

So I was intrigued about the inquiry’s outcome. Given the inquiry’s terms of reference, the recommendations were surprising: soliciting should not be an offence, laws should enable sex workers to share premises for safety, and previous convictions or cautions for prostitution should be deleted. In addition, the MPs recommended that sanctions tackling exploitation, coercion and control should be strengthened. Given the previous hard-line in Home Office policy that prostitution-must-be-reduced-no-matter-what, the progressive, evidence-based recommendations placing sex workers’ health and safety at the centre were welcomed by sex workers and allies.

Mixed reaction

The Sex Worker Open University, which advocates for rights for sex workers and decriminalisation of the sex industry, said it was “a giant step forward for sex workers’ rights in the UK”. The escort, campaigner and blogger Laura Lee, described it as a “very exciting time for sex workers’ rights”.

Others rejected the recommendations, continuing to campaign for the Nordic Model. The campaign group End Demand welcomed the decriminalisation of sex workers themselves, but argued for a “three-pronged approach” to tackling prostitution (defined as sexual exploitation) by decriminalising sex workers, criminalising clients and providing exit services for sex workers. They do not state what should happen to sex workers who don’t wish to exit sex work.
In a critique of the report, another lobby group called Nordic Model Now requested that the submissions calling for the Nordic Model should be re-read "with an open mind". After the allegations emerged about Keith Vaz, the same organisation protested outside Portcullis House in Westminster, chanting a rhyme about his sex purchasing to the tune of "Build a Bonfire". They have asked for the report be thrown out.

**The work must go on**

So what will the outcome be? The July report is interim, and officially the inquiry is ongoing. Importantly and pragmatically, this is not about Vaz. It's about the rights of sex workers to health, safety and public protection, and having a robust legal system which recognises and prioritises these. It’s about ensuring that those who need support to leave the sex industry have it, and that exploiters and trafficking – recognised as distinct to paid sex between consenting adults – are appropriately targeted.

In 2015, Northern Ireland criminalised the purchase of sex. No-one has been prosecuted under this law, but hate-fuelled attacks committed against sex workers are evident, and have taken place since the law was enacted. The report and recommendations were the outcome of a committee as a whole, based on a thorough review of evidence submitted by many sex workers, academics, experts, organisations and varied feminist voices. Listening to these voices is what matters. They must not be silenced.

Article originally published online at: https://theconversation.com/after-keith-vaz-why-the-home-affairs-select-committees-prostitution-inquiry-must-continue-64998

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**Duality study**

By Raven Bowen

My name is Raven, I've been an advocate for sex worker health, safety and recognition for many years in Canada. I used to run a sex worker organization called PACE Society in Vancouver and I coordinated the BC Coalition of Experiential Communities, a regional sex worker research and advocacy group. My most recent advocacy project was Hooker Monologues, performed March 2016 in Canada. I'm now at the University of York doing my PhD and I'm proud to be on the board of ScotPEP, a sex worker organization. See my Bio https://www.york.ac.uk/sociology/our-staff/students/raven-bowen/

My past academic work was about how people transition in and out of sex work, deal with 'whore stigma' and challenge those who see sex work only as harm. I highlight that some people are not entering or leaving sex work, instead they find ways to balance jobs in both sex work and square (non sexual) work at the same time. I call this 'duality.'

I'm seeking participants to interview to explore how people manage information about themselves, decide who to disclose to and who not to, carve out different work identities, keep secrets, switch back and forth between jobs, and how experiences in either job to helps or hinders performance in the other. We will discuss the benefits and challenges of working in this very versatile way and discover tips and strategies to help others who do the same.

**Participants must:**
- be over 18 years old
- work in the off-street sex industry
- hold at least one non sex work paid job (all paid work included, casual, part or full-time, self-employed, etc.)
- live and work in the UK and
- have relevant experience juggling both kinds of work

More details are on the project blog https://dualitystudy.blogspot.co.uk/

The goal of the study is to expand the ways that people define and describe sex work and sex workers. Some discourses discuss sex work as something that someone is 'trapped' in or has 'survived', or as something that people are either 'in' or 'out' of. There is very little academic work on strategic involvement in sex work and few studies challenge mainstream notions of who a sex worker is or can be.

I argue that sex workers participate in all kinds of skilled work across jobs in sex work and square work and unless outed, most people can be in a room with or work with sex workers and not know it...and for good reason! The violence of stigma perpetrated by mainstream society keeps people in hiding, hence the title of the study 'In Plain Sight: an examination of 'duality', the simultaneous involvement in sex work and square work.'

If you're interested, email me at dualitystudy@gmail.com
Whoretography: An introduction to the project

By Camille Melissa

I am a Documentary Photographer, Masters Student, Sex Worker & Sex Work Activist interested in challenging the victim-centered nature of sex worker imagery and how photography is instrumental in the war against sex workers. I want to challenge the prevailing ideology of sex-work & present to the viewer an alternative perception of the industry and its participants - frequently obscured by one particular, narrow version of feminism, by anti-sex-work rhetoric & by modern Western cultural attitudes towards women’s bodies & sex.

My work is aimed at stopping the over-simplification of the lives of sex workers, & to challenge current imagery that encourages the sense that the only way of interpreting their lives is to see them as ripe for 'rescue.'

In the war on sex work, photography silences the intentions, actions, and feelings of sex workers & serves to make their lives more precarious. This narrow & selective representation of male oppression reproduces a politics of pity embedded in the visual representation of sex workers. This visual representation suggests only pity makes sense as a political, social & cultural response. Through my practice-based MA, I am answering the question Whoretography; Is it possible to reclaim the word whore though visual practice as research?

Whoretography is a multifaceted endeavour that works with found material uncovered via various visual research techniques and cyber ethnography. Below is a list of activities of what I am working on now (not including the work I undertake as part of the Masters Programme)

1) Launching the Whoretography Magazine, which will be a quarterly e-magazine sold via blurb. I do have plans to make this a printed magazine as well.

2) Maintaining the website as a space on the Internet dedicated solely to the discussion of sex work imagery.

3) Planning a series of speaking engagements, both in London and Manchester.

4) Currently curating an exhibition to be held in central London and drinks night to launch the Whoretography magazine, will be held in Clapham Old Town.

5) Working on getting 6 – 8 books to publication

6) Working on creating an online library dedicated to sex work photo-books and visual based projects.

Whoretography is the intersection of where imagery, technologies, society & the sex worker rights movement collide. I am seeking much-needed funding to take Whoretography from a Masters project to a photo-book publishing house and visual activist platform dedicated solely to the advancement of sex worker rights through the medium of photography and visual practice.

www.whoretography.com
info@whoretography.com
www.gofundme.com/w-toigraphy
@Whoretographer
WCMT 2016: Exploring Best Practice of Managed Areas of Street Sex Work within a European Context.

By Carolyn Henham

I am honoured to have been awarded a Fellowship from Winston Churchill Memorial Trust 2016. WCMT has funded travel fellowships across the world for fifty years with the motto: “go to learn, return to inspire”. Each WCMT Fellow has developed a project relevant to their professions with emphasis on expanding knowledge for themselves and others; seeking to return and inform policy and practice back in the UK.

I have been awarded a travel fellowship for 5 weeks, to selected locations, to gather evidence of innovative practice in response to current tensions between sex work policy and sex worker migration. I am especially interested in how these developments inform discourse, service delivery and sex worker organisation in relation to street (visible) spaces of sex work. Through visiting selected European locations (as outlined below), I will explore the differing tensions between policy and the impact on the lived experiences of sex workers. Within this, I primarily intend to explore sex worker participation in co-design, co-production and co-delivery of initiatives.

I approach this project as a Peer Researcher as I have 6 years experience working in the sex industry within most sectors. During this ethnographic journey I hope to discover data that is rich, useful and informative on many levels. There is scope for the agenda to change and be flexible according to recommendations, and where interest leads me. I intend to gather visual and audio imagery and write a blog, in addition to the report for WCMT on my return. I anticipate and hope that this project will inspire further developments once back in the UK.

I would greatly appreciate any guidance, personal recommendations, and introductions that SWRH members can assist with such as key professionals, academics, service providers and activists.

I would also greatly welcome any opportunities during and after my travel to present and disseminate my findings at sex work related events.

The locations selected have been identified through preliminary research and chosen as examples that illustrate current tensions between policy and sex worker rights, safety and autonomy in visible street spaces. I will be travelling from mid November to mid December 2016. Currently I hope to travel to: Switzerland (Geneva and Zurich); Germany (Bonn, Cologne, Essen, Hamburg, Berlin); and Netherlands (Amsterdam, Utrecht, Rotterdam, Groningen)

I have nearly 25 years professional experience of direct work with disadvantaged or marginalised populations, including adult female sex workers and young women at risk of sexual exploitation. My most recent employment was as Housing and Benefits Advisor at Basis Yorkshire, sex work project in Leeds. I also spent 7 years in the 1990s at Bradford Working Women’s Project. I also have extensive experience of delivering training, group-work and community development within these professional roles, including experience of delivering Peer Education programmes.

I have a particular interest in Participation Action Research and the role of the Arts in research as well as for personal and community development.
Report on the symposium: ‘Shifting Tides: Reimagining Sex Work, Law and Activism in the 21st Century’

By Eva Klambauer, PhD candidate at Kings College London

On the 15th of June, Dr Prabha Kotiswaran and Eva Klambauer from the Dickson Poon School of Law together with the Sex Work Research Hub hosted a symposium on the regulation of sex work. The symposium received generous support from the Dickson Poon School of Law. Throughout the day, speakers and participants deliberated on developments in Europe, the Americas and Australia, and thought through and beyond the presumed centrality of criminal law to sex work and debated other equally crucial sites of law reform including labour law and municipal law. Laws and discourses that continually impede possibilities for enhancing sex workers’ rights were taken stock of, and sex workers’ disposition towards the law and their renewed vocabularies of resistance were revisited. The symposium brought together a variety of outstanding speakers from academia, the NGO sector and the sex workers’ movement.

The day was opened by a speech by the Acting Dean of the Dickson Poon School of Law Professor Ben Bowling, who shared his analysis of the role of criminal law and punishment in modern society. The first panel entitled ‘International Sex Workers’ Activism’ was chaired by Professor Munro and provided insights into the regulation of sex work in Sweden, Norway and New South Wales in Australia, as well as international sex workers’ rights organising and unionisation. Following this, a panel called ‘Beyond Criminal Law’, chaired by Dr Belinda Brooks-Gordon, addressed issues such as the regulation of sex work in the digital age, the legal consciousness of sex workers, as well as the roles of municipal law and labour law in the sex industry. The third panel on ‘Trafficking and the Persistence of Sex Work Exceptionalism’ was chaired by Dr Prabha Kotiswaran from the Dickson Poon School of Law and engaged with debates and campaigns on trafficking for sexual exploitation. Evidence on anti-trafficking campaigns in the US, Argentina and the UK and France were presented and narratives of trafficking and its conflations with sex work were discussed. The fourth panel on ‘Lobbying for Sex Work’ was chaired by Assistant Professor Samantha Majic and provided insights from the perspectives of health promotion, activism and NGOs. The panellists highlighted that the criminalisation of sex work jeopardises sex workers’ health, human rights and safety. The last panel was chaired by Luca Stevenson, who is a coordinator of the International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers. This panel entitled ‘Reimagining Sex Work and the Law’ shed light on the importance of participatory research methods and the inclusion of sex workers in policy debates. An active sex worker spoke up and shared her experiences of feeling stigmatised by the criminal justice system. The attendees also heard from Amnesty International and its recently published policy in support of decriminalising sex work.

As the sex work debates emerge out of the severely polarized corridors of feminist thinking and into the mainstream of public opinion, the symposium on sex work at the Dickson Poon School of Law provided a space for sex workers, scholars, activists and policy-makers to come together to share research findings and ensure the impact of academic work on political debates and decisions.
New members, new research

This section of the SWRH newsletter will be dedicated to our new members, and will highlight some of the fantastic work that they are doing!

♦ Michela Turno, PhD (2012) - University of Leicester
Michela is an independent historian whose research interests focus on history and cultural representations of prostitution in Italy.

♦ Anastasia Diatlova—PhD researcher, University of Helsinki
Anastasia’s research focuses on the experience of Russian-speaking sex workers in Finland and their ability to access healthcare, housing and social services.

♦ Navin Kumar—PhD researcher, Yale University
Navin’s work explores the role of masculinity in understanding the occupational context of male sex work (MSW), specifically independent escorts who seek primarily male clients.

♦ Megan Easterbrook-Smith—PhD researcher, Victoria University, Wellington
Megan’s PhD focuses on news media coverage of sex work in New Zealand, with a specific interest in post-decriminalisation coverage, and considering the ways in which acceptability is constructed and restricted based on how particular sex workers carry out their jobs.

♦ Laura McMenzie—PhD researcher, Northumbria University
Laura’s research focus is on the policy mobilities of sex work policy, with a specific focus on the transnational circulation of the Swedish and Dutch policies.

♦ Rebecca Meiksin—Researcher, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
Rebecca is currently working on a systematic literature review of the impact of criminalisation on sex workers’ health, safety and access to healthcare.

♦ Patrick Preston—PhD researcher and Associate tutor, University of East Anglia
Patrick’s thesis will explore how stories of London’s regeneration have been told in the recent past. As part of this research Patrick will make a set of arguments on queer male sex work in literature.

♦ Marije van Stempvoort – PhD researcher, Swansea University
Marije’s work will further analyse data from the Student Sex Work Project in the UK alongside data from student sex workers in Amsterdam. In her research she will focus at the sex workers’ motivations, experiences and needs.

♦ Jordan Dawson—PhD researcher, Swansea University
Jordan’s research will focus on male sex work, looking at physical and sexual violence. In particular his work will explore the factors which may leave men reluctant to report such incidences.
A Drop of Hope: The West End Sex Workers Memorial

The City of Vancouver (Canada) has formally paid back the full amount of money collected from sex workers’ fines—over $15,000 dollars—in the form of a public Sex Workers Memorial located in the very same place from which they were uprooted. The memorial reads:

“Today, we commemorate and honour their lives”

“In memory of their ongoing struggle for equality”

“People who lived and worked here from mid-1960s to 1984”

“Dedicated to a diverse community of sex workers.”

Photo and Text Credit: https://blogs.ubc.ca/oraliagr/the-west-end-sex-workers-memorial/

Scotland: Sex Workers, Academics and Sex Worker Led Organisations Came Together at Successful Event in Scottish Parliament

On 27th September, sex worker charity Scot-Pep held an event in the Scottish Parliament. Aimed at briefing members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs), MSP staff, and other invited policy-makers, this even brought together sex workers, academics, and representatives from sex worker-led groups.

Professor Gillian Abel provided a keynote presentation and the event was a huge success, with the room at full capacity, and the attendees showing a real interest in sex worker rights.


Next time…

♦ The next edition of the newsletter will be edited by Dr Mary Laing (Northumbria University) and Dr Nicky Smith (University of Birmingham).

♦ Do you know somebody who would like to be involved with 21 questions? If so, please email Raven Bowen at rorb500@york.ac.uk

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