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Factors Associated With Female Online Sex Workers' Intentions to Exit From Sex Work

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Sociology

by

Jesse James Drucker

June 2016

Dissertation Committee

Dr. Tanya Nieri, Chairperson

Dr. Raymond Russell

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The Dissertation of Jesse James Drucker is approved:

Committee Chairperson

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DEDICATION

For my grandparents

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Factors Associated With Female Online Sex Workers' Intentions to Exit From Sex Work

by

Jesse James Drucker

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Sociology
University of California, Riverside, June 2016
Tanya Nieri, PhD, Chairperson

The sex work industry has evolved with the emergence of internet marketing, but little research examines sex workers who advertise online (i.e., online sex workers). This study is based on semi-structured interviews conducted in Southern California in 2014, with twenty-seven female online sex workers who provide mainstream sexual services to a male clientele. It focuses on sex workers' perceptions of exit from sex work, and examines factors related to exit intentions, including relationships with sex work consumers, other sex workers, friends, family, and intimate partners (i.e., differential association), definitions of sex work, the perceived benefits and costs of sex work (i.e., differential reinforcement), and the prominence of and commitment to the sex worker identity. Participants varied in their perceptions of exit meaning, desirability, and feasibility. Of the 27 participants, 16 intended to exit sex work within 5 years whereas 11 had no such intentions. The study tested hypotheses informed by social learning theory in criminology and identity theory in social psychology. Support was found for most hypotheses, except those regarding the relation of differential association to other factors. In each instance, some cases deviated from the expected pattern, indicating that an expanded theoretical model is needed to explain exit from sex work.

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I. Introduction

This study examines female sex workers who provide mainstream sexual services to a male clientele and charge mid-range rates for their services: \$180 to \$400 per hour. The sex workers primarily recruit consumers via the internet and are, thus, online sex workers. As opposed to outdoor sex workers (a.k.a. street sex workers), indoor sex workers typically include brothel workers, call girls, bar hustlers, and online sex workers. The study analyzes factors that are associated with mid-range online sex workers' intentions to exit from sex work.

As the sex work industry has grown, scholarly attention to sex work has increased. Yet, "the irony is that most research has been done on the least prevalent type of prostitution. All too often overlooked is the large population of indoor workers" (Weitzer 2005: 215). Street-based workers have declined to just 15% to 30% of the total population of sex workers (Bimbi 2007; Moffatt and Peters 2004; Murphy and Venkatesh 2006; Weitzer 2005). The growth in online sex work was responsible for a 50% rise in the sex work industry more broadly from 1998 to 2008 (Cunningham and Kendall 2011b), and led to substantial changes in the sex work industry, but little research has examined the online sector (Bimbi 2007; Murphy and Venkatesh 2006). According to this author's review of literature, scholars have published more than 2000 articles on sex work, and writings on sex work more than doubled in the past decade. However, only 31 of these articles mentioned the internet. Some research has analyzed emerging types of online communication about sex work (Katsulis 2010; Durkin 2007). However, there is a

need for research that analyzes online sex workers generally and the issue of exit from online sex work specifically (Murphy and Venkatesh 2006).

Although researchers have studied exit from sex work, they focused on populations of outdoor sex workers that differ in meaningful ways from the population examined in this study. Sanders (2007) found that indoor sex workers' conceptualization of exit is unlike that of most participants in previous research, which consisted of outdoor sex workers who spoke of a need to "hit bottom" before quitting. Whereas women who exit outdoor sex work have a higher incidence of drug addiction (Murphy 2010; Oselin 2009, 2010; Sanders 2007) and are more likely to be forced to exit by multiple arrests (Oselin 2009, 2010), online sex workers generally have few arrests (Cunningham and Kendall 2011b). Outdoor sex workers tend to have high rates of emotional disturbance (Gibson-Ainyette et al. 1988), and indoor sex workers are generally emotionally stable, relatively speaking (Exner et al., 1977). These differences between outdoor and indoor sex workers may be associated with different perceptions of exit desirability and feasibility, and different reasons for remaining in sex work or intending to exit from it.

As heightened policing forced street sex workers to adopt indoor marketing strategies, including internet advertising, sex workers increasingly embraced sex work as a long-term career (Murphy and Venkatesh 2006). The industry-wide transformation has changed workers' relations with each other and patterns of earning (Murphy and Venkatesh 2006). Online sex workers are relatively more physically isolated from each other than other sex workers (e.g., street-based workers, brothel workers, call-girls) because they have no regular physical place to congregate and exchange information

(Bernstein 2007b; Murphy and Venkatesh 2006; Parsons et al. 2007). The present study examines online sex workers' relationships with each other and how their social ties relate to their perceptions of sex work and exit.

“Mid-range” sex workers have not often been studied, even though they now comprise the majority of the industry (Murphy and Venkatesh 2006; Weitzer 2005). Mid-range sex workers earn more than enough money to survive but are not wealthy. The internet has created opportunities for mid-range sex workers by spawning virtual communities where consumers can congregate anonymously and invite solicitation from sex workers (Bernstein 2007 a; Durkin 2007; Pruitt 2007). The internet allows sex workers to reach a broad audience with advertisements, to build reputations on websites that contain consumer confirmations of value, and to screen consumers by conducting background checks with internet search engines that lower their exposure to arrest and violence (Cunningham and Kendall 2011b). It may facilitate crime generally, and sex work specifically, when website members collectively protect themselves from victimization in the absence of protection from law enforcement (Davies and Evans 2007; Durkin 2007). For example, members of websites where people engage in a variety of deviant activities publish lists of individuals who endangered them (Davies and Evans 2007; Durkin 2007). Sex workers in the present study have access to these features of online sex work that may increase their benefits and reduce their costs of engaging in sex work.

Online sex workers who have middle-class families of origin may have an advantage over competitors who come from working class families in terms of the ability

to handle the emotional labor of sex work. Hochschild (1983: 20) hypothesized that middle-class parents better prepare children for emotional labor than do working-class parents. Bernstein's (2007a) middle-class sex workers, who mastered emotional labor, recognized that they could attract reliable consumers because they shared similar class backgrounds. The present study examines the relationship between the costs of performing emotional labor and intentions to exit among sex workers who come from a variety of social class backgrounds. The present study fills gaps in the literature by focusing on mid-range online female sex workers and their perceptions of exit from sex work.

In summary, the study makes three broad contributions to the existing literature. First, the study increases our understanding of sex work. In particular, the study uncovers the attitudes and orientations of mid-range online sex workers, the largest and most understudied segment of the sex work industry. Included in this focus is an examination of the relationships that sex workers have with various people, and the association of these relationships with intentions to exit from sex work. Although a few researchers have examined these relationships, they did so at a time when sex work websites were rudimentary (Bernstein 2007a; Murphy and Venkatesh 2006). This study analyzes facilitators of and challenges to exit from sex work among indoor sex workers, who have only been the focus of research on exit twice (Murphy and Venkatesh 2006; Sanders 2007). Previous research has taken for granted that sex workers would want to exit, but this study examines variation in the desirability and feasibility of exit. Second, the study contributes to the criminology literature by elaborating on social learning theory with

concepts and arguments from identity theory to develop and test a model of desistance from criminal careers – in this case, exit from sex work. Third, the study can inform the development of interventions for sex workers by illuminating challenges that online sex workers face to exiting sex work.

Research Questions

The study investigates how mid-range online sex workers' differential association (i.e., ties to other sex workers and consumers relative to other people) relates to their intentions to exit from sex work (Aim 1):

1.1 How does differential association relate to sex workers' definitions of sex work?

1.2 How does differential association relate to sex workers' differential reinforcement (i.e., the balance of benefits and costs of engaging in sex work)?

1.3 How does differential association relate to sex workers' intentions to exit from sex work?

Second, the study examines how sex workers' definitions of sex work relate to their intentions to exit from sex work (Aim 2):

2.1 How do definitions of sex work relate to intentions to exit from sex work?

Third, the study examines how sex workers' differential reinforcement relates to their intentions to exit from sex work (Aim 3):

3.1 How do the perceived benefits and costs of sex work relate to sex workers' intentions to exit from sex work?

3.1a How do the costs of performing emotional labor relate to intentions to exit from sex work?

3.2 How does sex worker identity commitment relate to intentions to exit from sex work?

3.3 How does sex worker identity prominence relate to intentions to exit from sex work?

II. Background and Significance

Sex Work: The Intersection of Crime and Labor

This section explains how the present study fits into the existing literature on sex work. It categorizes topics within the academic literature on sexual commerce, which scholars started referring to as “sex work” in the 1980s (Delacoste and Alexander 1998), discusses a social movement that paved the way for researchers to consider the career orientations and emotional labor of sex workers, and reviews workplace concepts that are relevant to the study of sex work.

Many studies have examined how sex workers operate. Other studies focus on the criminal nature of sex work, its social consequences and causes. Many studies on sex work have addressed human trafficking or explored health risks associated with sex work and drug use by sex workers. For instance, much research examines the role of sex workers in the spread of HIV/AIDS and other diseases (Abrams 2001; Berk 1990; de Zalduondo 1991; Lau, Tsui, Siah, and Zhang 2002; McKeganey 1994; Nahmias 1989; Poll 2011). Other scholarship addresses the utility of legislative efforts to control sex work (Anderson 2002; Clemmitt 2008; Drexler 1996; Farley 2004; Jolin 1994; May 1999; Phoenix 2007; Rio 1991; Sanders 2005; Sullivan 2010; Waltman 2011; Weitzer 2006).

By this author’s count, more than 220 articles have analyzed entrance into sex work, but few have examined exit from it (Brock 1998; Dalla 2006; Månsson and Hedin 1999; Murphy and Venkatesh 2006; Oselin 2009, 2010; Rosen and Venkatesh 2008; Sanders 2007). The studied causes of entrance include mental deficiencies (e.g., Gibson-

Ainyette, Templer, Brown, and Veaco 1988), poor parenting (e.g., Price 1989), urbanization and broken homes (e.g., Khalaf 1968), positive social reinforcement from deviants and broken conventional social bonds (e.g., Gray 1973), atypical initiation into sexual activity (e.g., James and Davis 1982), coercion by participants in the sex industry (e.g., Heyl 1977), normalization of monogamy (e.g., Werner 1984), repressive social norms (e.g., Smith and Pollack 1976), capitalism (e.g., Hirata 1979), economic instability and anomie (e.g., Cohen 1958). Pomeroy (1965) found that women chose sex work because it served multiple aims: the money was good, there were opportunities to meet new people, and it was exciting. Scholars have not examined how these entrance factors might be related to exit intentions. The present study examines how social ties and sex work benefits (i.e., reinforcement) relate to exit intentions.

A U.S.-based organization named Coyote arose in the 1970s to redefine and destigmatize sex work while introducing images to the public of sex workers who performed labor that was no less credible than any other form of service work (Jenness 1993). Coyote reconstructed the problem of sex work as a civil rights issue in which women were denied control over their bodies, denied the right to work in conditions of their own choosing, and were victimized by a stigmatizing state (Jenness 1993). Coyote changed how scholars wrote about sex work by framing sex work as an occupation that women choose (Jenness 1993). The present study gives voice to sex workers and assumes that choices to exit from sex work might be informed by the same considerations that determine decisions to exit from other forms of labor.

Research on occupations has examined job satisfaction as it relates to job changes and exits; however, this work has focused on legal occupations and, thus, has not examined sex work. Scholars in this area of research have documented the rise of contingent labor, which is “any job in which an individual does not have an explicit or implicit contract for long-term employment or one in which the minimum hours worked can vary in a non-systematic manner” (Polivka & Nardone 1989: 11; Smith 2010). In a meta-analysis, Wilkin (2012) concluded that contingent workers are less satisfied with their jobs than are permanent employees. This study explores how the job satisfaction (i.e., balance of perceived benefits and costs) derived from online sex work, which we may consider to be contingent labor, relates to online sex workers’ intentions to exit.

Evans, Kunda, and Barley (2004) found that technical contractors did not take advantage of benefits that contingent labor theoretically offers. In particular, technical contractors did not fit vacations into their schedules and did not work shorter hours than they would if subject to supervision in a permanent workplace. Furthermore, contractors sometimes worked hours without billing the client because they wanted to build solid reputations. Sex workers are like contractors in that they bill by the hour and may recognize both advantages and disadvantages in spending “free time” with clients to build relationships and reputations, but they may take vacations to avoid burnout.

The present study examines sex workers’ perceptions of their work and exit from it. Concepts from the criminology literature that have been empirically and theoretically connected to desistance from crime, such as differential association, differential reinforcement, and definitions favorable to crime, may help to explain sex workers’ job

perceptions and decisions because the illegality and stigmatization of sex work affects them. Thus, sex work is not exactly like legal work. It has been considered deviant in most societies for many centuries (Bernstein 2007b). Despite the efforts of political organizations to counter widespread imputations of deviance to sex work (Jenness 1993), sex work defies social norms and is, therefore, deviant. This study explores how sex work's illegality factors into sex workers' intentions to exit.

In summary, the newest, largest, and fastest growing form of sex work – online sex work – has received little scholarly attention. This study examines sex work at the intersection of crime and labor, with a focus on sex workers' intentions to exit.

Theoretical Framework

The present study's theoretical model (see Appendix B) integrates constructs from Social Learning Theory (Akers 2009), Identity Theory (Burke and Stets 2009), and previous sex work research (Bernstein 2007; Murphy and Venkatesh 2006).

Social Learning Theory. Social Learning Theory (SLT), as illustrated in Appendix C argues that one set of factors produces criminal behavior (Akers and Jensen 2009). Differential association, definitions of acts, differential reinforcement, and imitation determine how people will behave (Akers and Jensen 2009). Social learning theorists generally seek to explain involvement in crime (Akers and Jensen 2009) but contend that the theory can also explain desistance from crime (Akers and Sellers 2004; Akers and Cochran 1985).

The theory argues that a person's differential association determines how she defines acts and whether she will engage in the acts (Akers 2009). The relationships in

which a person has invested the most time and emotional energy have the strongest bearing on the person's definitions of acts (Akers and Jensen 2009). Thus, the intensity of social ties to criminals relative to other people is positively associated with having favorable definitions of criminal acts and with the likelihood of engaging in crime. However, the level of exposure to criminals is also positively associated with defining criminal acts favorably (i.e., good, moral, acceptable, and/or desirable) and with the likelihood of engaging in crime (Akers and Jensen 2009).

A person's willingness to engage in any behavior depends on how she defines it (Akers and Jensen 2009). Definitions include orientations toward acts and rationalizations that amount to either positive or negative perceptions of the behavior (Akers and Jensen 2009). Favorable definitions (i.e., positive perceptions) of acts are associated with engagement in the behavior and unfavorable definitions are not (Akers and Jensen 2009). For example, a person who defines sex work as undesirable due to its dangers will have a negative perception of sex work and be unwilling to engage in sex work. According to SLT, favorable definitions of sex work serve to maintain engagement in sex work whereas unfavorable definitions do not, and, thus, could lead to exit.

The intensity of social ties to criminals relative to non-criminals (i.e., differential association) is positively related to the probability and value of differential reinforcement for engaging in crime (Akers 2009). Differential reinforcement is the balance of anticipated and actual rewards and punishments that a behavior produces relative to alternative behaviors (Akers 2009). Behavior that is differentially reinforced (i.e., reinforced over alternative behaviors) maximizes reward and minimizes punishment. The

likelihood of a person engaging in criminal behavior is positively related to the utility generated by criminal behavior relative to alternative behaviors (i.e., differential reinforcement for criminal behavior). Reinforcement for engaging in a behavior can drive levels of involvement in it, independent of a person's definitions of the behavior (Akers 2009).

SLT also argues that imitation of crime can result from observation of it, through differential association. However, because imitation factors more into entry into crime than desistance from it, it is not a focus of the present study.

Following SLT, then, the present study hypothesizes that differential association with consumers and sex workers relative to other people will be positively associated with having favorable definitions of sex work (Hypotheses 1 and 2) and differential reinforcement for engaging in sex work (Hypotheses 3 and 6) and negatively associated with intentions to exit sex work (Hypotheses 9 and 10). Favorable definitions of sex work and differential reinforcement for engaging in sex work will be negatively associated with intentions to exit from sex work (Hypothesis 11 and 12).

Limitations of Social Learning Theory. Compared to other criminological theories, SLT accounts for a great deal of the variance in crime (Akers and Jensen 2009). However, SLT has shortcomings. First, although differential association is a better predictor of future involvement in crime than any variable other than prior involvement in crime, it remains unclear why (Warr 2002). For instance, there is inconsistent empirical support for SLT's claim that differential association influences crime through definitions favorable to crime (Warr 2002). Second, SLT does not satisfactorily account

for variation in criminal behavior when differential association and reinforcement remain constant. Finally, the correlation between differential reinforcement and crime is large because SLT broadly defines reinforcement as anything that people value (Akers and Sellers 2004). SLT does not explain differences between people in reinforcement values. SLT's limitations largely stem from its focus on environmental attributes, such as levels of rewards/punishments and people to administer them, and its neglect of personal attributes. SLT does not consider how personal attributes relate to desistance from crime.

The present study addresses the limitations of SLT in several ways. It incorporates personal attributes into a model of desistance from crime – in this case, exit from sex work. It borrows insights from Identity Theory (IT) (Burke and Stets 2009) to expand the conceptualization of reinforcement and to account for differences between people. IT can explain differences between people in their reinforcement and how reinforcement relates to desistance. It addresses the question of why differential association relates to crime by adding to the model two constructs from IT (identity commitment and identity prominence) as mechanisms of effect. The assumptions of SLT are compatible with the assumptions of IT, as both theories elaborate on Mead's (1934) theory of human behavior (Akers and Sellers 2004; Burke and Stets 2009).

Identity Theory. According to IT (Burke and Stets 2009), every person has numerous identities (see Appendix D). The strength of a person's social ties to people with whom she interacts while engaged in behaviors related to an identity determines her commitment to that identity (Stryker 2004). Identity commitment is a person's level of investment in (or the cost of losing) an identity (Burke and Stets 2009). Identity

commitment positively relates to identity prominence (Stryker and Serpe 1982), which is the importance of an identity to a person.

IT argues that people constantly strive to match the way other people view them with the way they view themselves – that is, to achieve identity verification (Burke and Stets 2009; Stets and Harrod 2004). For example, if a woman views herself as an empathetic worker, she aims to verify the worker identity in her social interactions with people who assess her level of empathy. If people indicate that they do not view her as empathetic (i.e., do not verify her identity), the woman will experience negative emotions, which motivate her to continually adjust her behavior until identity verification is achieved (Burke 1991; Burke and Stets 2009; Zanna and Cooper 1976). Identity verification produces positive affect and prompts a person to continue performing behaviors associated with the verified identity, particularly those behaviors that elicited verifying feedback (Burke and Stets 2009). Persistent identity verification increases self-esteem (Cast and Burke 2002) and commitment to the identity (Stryker 2004). Identity commitment and prominence determine how much time people spend engaged in behaviors related to an identity (McCall and Simmons 1978; Stryker and Serpe 1982, 1994). If a person persistently fails to verify an identity, her self-esteem and commitment to the identity decline, and she might eventually abandon the identity (Burke and Harrod 2005; Cast and Burke 2002; Stryker 2004).

Identity commitment determines the probability and value of achieving identity verification (Burke and Reitzes 1991; Burke 1991; Stryker 2004). Thus, a feedback loop is formed between identity commitment and identity verification, with both affecting time

spent performing behaviors related to an identity. However, the loop can be broken by factors that disrupt identity verification, such as environmental changes (e.g., increased presence of competitors in the marketplace) and changes to other identities within the self. Furthermore, change in the quality of ties to people who verify one identity relative to another (i.e., differential association) is related to change in identity commitment and prominence.

As in SLT, IT argues that the strength of a person's social ties to people who verify one identity relative to another (i.e., differential association) relates to the benefits and costs that behavior produces (i.e., differential reinforcement associated with failed or successful identity verification) and the likelihood that that behavior will be repeated. Identity commitment and prominence are positively and reciprocally related to differential reinforcement associated with identity verification. Positive affect and increased self-esteem are benefits that arise from verifying an identity (e.g., sex worker identity), which reinforce behavior that produces identity verification (e.g., sex work). Negative affect and reduced self-esteem are costs that arise from failure to verify the identity, which reduce the time spent engaged in behaviors related to the identity. Eventually, "when social relationships do not contribute to identity-verification," people "may leave such relationships and seek identity verification and the resultant self-esteem, elsewhere" (Burke and Stets 2009: 82). For example, a person may exit from sex work.

Therefore, the present study hypothesizes that differential association with sex workers and consumers relative to other people will be positively associated with differential emotional reinforcement for engaging in sex work, sex worker identity

commitment, and sex worker identity prominence (Hypotheses 4, 7, and 8). Differential emotional reinforcement for engaging in sex work, sex worker identity commitment, and sex worker identity prominence will be negatively associated with intentions to exit from sex work (Hypotheses 13, 15, and 16).

Identity theorists have found that people claim role identities as holders of social positions, such as sex worker, and verification or non-verification of role identities raises or reduces the self-efficacy component of self-esteem (Stets and Burke 2000). Person identities resemble personality traits, such as caring. Person identity verification affects the self-authenticity component of self-esteem. When a person identity cannot be verified, the resultant decline in self-authenticity and/or self-efficacy might reduce the identity commitment and prominence and increase intentions to exit from it. For example, if a person describes herself as caring but believes that people at work do not see her as caring, then she might want to exit because work is unimportant to her (i.e., worker identity prominence is low) because it drains her self-authenticity. Alternatively, a person might intend to exit from sex work because being a sex worker means being friendly but she does not see herself as a friendly person.

According to IT and SLT, the strength of social ties is positively related to the benefits that behavior produces. However, SLT does not satisfactorily explain how a reduction in benefits might lead to desistance. IT argues that benefits and costs of behavior result from successes and failures to verify identities. People repeat behavior that is rewarding because it helps them verify an identity, and people will change their behavior if its contribution to verification changes. For instance, if the social environment

changes or if an identity standard changes, behavior that had previously verified an identity and produced benefits might become inadequate. The environment might change when competition changes the consumer expectations of a sex worker. Alternatively, a sex worker's personal priorities might change. If the expectations for verifying an identity (and obtaining benefits) decline, whether due to changes within the environment or within her, then a person's sex worker identity commitment would decline and intentions to exit would increase. Thus, IT resolves the problem that SLT does not explain why reinforcements, or a person's valuation of them, might change.

Because identity commitment and prominence determine levels of engagement in behaviors related to an identity (e.g., criminal behavior) and depend on variables other than differential reinforcement and differential association, IT provides a way to explain variation in criminal behavior when differential reinforcement and differential association remain constant.

Previous Research on Exit from Sex Work

This section reviews prior literature on exit from sex work to identify what is already known about it and what gaps in knowledge remain to be addressed. Research has generated information on how sex workers exit from sex work. For example, sex workers sometimes make a swift break from sex work if they enter a new environment, such as a new occupation (Månsson and Hedin 1999). More typically, sex workers embark on a gradual and lengthy exit process, which they often initiate by reducing their scope of services or transacting only with regular consumers (Månsson and Hedin 1999; Sanders 2007). Indoor sex workers spend many months and even years preparing

financially for exit, or “retirement” as some of them call it, and outdoor sex workers may prepare for exit by undergoing psychological therapy, reconciling with family, severing ties with deviant friends, and/or receiving assistance with housing and vocational skill development (Sanders 2007). This prior research shows that exit from sex work may not be a single, concrete event but rather a process and that the nature of the exit may vary depending on what factors are present prior to and during the process of exit.

Little is known about online sex workers’ desires to exit sex work and the factors that may relate to those desires. Researchers generally find that among outdoor sex workers, the desire to exit sex work is high (Dalla 2000; Månsson and Hedin 1999; Oselin 2010; Sanders 2007). Månsson and Hedin attributed this high desire to working conditions which they described as being similar to those in “prisons or concentration camps” (1999: 74). Other researchers found that outdoor sex workers toiled in violent environments that most people would seek to avoid. The sex workers in Dalla’s (2000) study described being raped at knife-point and beaten with tire irons by consumers and pimps. One participant in Oselin’s study had five coworkers who were murdered, and another said she had been “raped many times and left for dead” (2010: 533). Online sex workers may have better working conditions than outdoor sex workers (Weitzer 2005) and therefore, greater variability in their desire to exit.

Research has identified factors that generate intentions to exit from sex work. Sex workers sometimes become motivated to exit when they are exposed to former sex workers and realize that exit is possible, when they lose custody of their children, or when they perceive that sex work is becoming more physically dangerous (Dalla 2000;

Oselin 2010; Sanders 2007). Some sex workers become motivated to exit when they feel that they are too old or psychologically and physically fatigued to continue in the sex work industry and/or they perceive that heightened competition has reduced their income from sex work (Dalla 2000; Månsson and Hedin 1999; Oselin 2010; Sanders 2007). A desire to maintain sobriety, often obtained while incarcerated for sex work, may motivate exit (Oselin 2010). In some cases, the sex worker's perception that the job is a poor fit for her personally may motivate exit. For example, Oselin found that sex workers became motivated to exit when the incompatibility of sex work with their religious beliefs became intolerable to them or when they grew weary of having sex with men because they were "not attracted to men" (2010: 534). Others became motivated to exit when sex work interfered with their parenting or romantic relationships (Oselin 2010).

While a sex worker may have many reasons to exit, she may not actually exit until she experiences a turning point event (Oselin 2010), consisting of either a "traumatic event" (e.g., violent encounter with a consumer or pimp) or a "positive life event" (e.g., falling in love or giving birth) (Månsson and Hedin 1999: 71). Turning point events increase the salience of motivations for exit by changing a person's goals and priorities (Oselin 2010). For example, Oselin (2010) described incarceration for sex work and hospitalization for psychological duress as traumatic events that led to exit attempts in her sample. That said, unless accompanied by strategies for earning alternative income, turning point events may be insufficient for preventing a return to sex work after triggering an attempted exit (Månsson and Hedin 1999; Sanders 2007). Whereas a common reason for exiting is declining sex work revenue (Sanders 2007), monetary

considerations (i.e., need for money) may pull sex workers back into the industry after an attempted exit (Murphy and Venkatesh 2006; Sanders 2007; Williamson and Folaron 2003).

Even when motivated to exit, sex workers may find that challenges to exit make exit infeasible (Baker, Dalla, and Williamson 2010). For example, economic challenges to exit may include financial instability, limited occupational skills, and homelessness (Dalla 2000; Oselin 2010). Drug addiction may also impede exit by creating financial strain (Dalla 2000; Murphy 2010; Oselin 2010; Sanders 2007). Psychological “addiction” to elements of the job itself, such as the lifestyle, the fast money, and attention from consumers has prevented sex workers from exiting (Murphy and Venkatesh 2006; Parsons et al. 2007; Williamson and Folaron 2003).

Support programs have been identified as an exit facilitator. Sex worker rehabilitation programs prepare sex workers for exit by assisting them with education, job placement, and recovery from drug addiction (Oselin 2010). They also promote incremental attitudinal and behavioral changes to facilitate exit (Oselin 2009). Many participants in a sex worker rehabilitation program perceived that they would not be able to exit without the help of the program because the challenges to exiting were insurmountable without assistance (Oselin 2010). Some had tried to exit on their own but gave up because they did not know how to exit. Dalla’s (2000) participants did not exit until they obtained occupational training and sobriety in prison or through participation in an intervention program.

Social networks may facilitate exit by giving sex workers information about available rehabilitation programs and/or emotional and practical support during the process of exit (Månsson and Hedin 1999; Oselin 2010). People who connect sex workers to rehabilitation programs are called “bridges” (Oselin 2010). While previous research has examined how social networks facilitate exit in various ways, the present study examines how social networks may motivate exit. It also analyzes the association between desirability and feasibility of exit among online sex workers and examines whether and how they prepare for exit.

Nearly all of the research on exit from sex work has examined identity transformation – that is, transitioning from identifying as a sex worker to an ex-sex worker – as part of the process of exiting sex work. Identity change occurs as people break away from the sex worker role and create a new identity (i.e., the ex-role) (Månsson and Hedin 1999). Månsson and Hedin found that whether they experienced turning points or not, some sex workers felt “suspended between two worlds” as they “left the familiar world of prostitution” before finding a “new world to which they feel a sense of connection and belonging” (1999: 72). These women had feelings of ambivalence towards sex work and insecurity in their new identity (Månsson and Hedin 1999). Sex workers who experienced positive turning points, such as finding a new job or entering into a romantic relationship, more seamlessly created an “ex-role” (Månsson and Hedin 1999). Nearly all of Oselin’s (2009, 2010) participants experienced negative turning points and, thus, relied on formal organizational assistance to exit the sex worker identity and create a new identity.

Creation of the ex-role or new identity involves the formation of new social relationships, but Månsson and Hedin's work (1999) does not explain their significance or contribution to identity transformation. Sanders's (2007) participants attributed their drifting in and out of sex work to the social ties they maintained with deviants and conformists. The women said that they could not complete their identity transformation without eliminating "opportunities of deviance" that "old networks" created (Sanders 2007: 90). However, the study did not make clear how new networks contributed to their identity transformation. The present study examines the role of relationships with people in and out of the sex work industry in motivating exit.

The research-to-date on identity transformation in the process of exit from sex work focuses narrowly on the transition from sex work identity to ex-sex worker identity (Månsson and Hedin 1999; Dalla 2006; Oselin 2009, 2010; Sanders 2007). However, according to identity theory (Burke and Stets 2009), a person's commitment to an infinite variety of new or preexisting identities can grow as commitment to the sex worker identity declines. Furthermore, people can hold more than one identity at a time. The present research examines how sex workers' various identities relate to intentions to exit.

The prior literature on exit from sex work has gaps in knowledge that the present study addresses. First, most prior work examines outdoor sex workers who had already exited or were attempting to exit from sex work. The present study examines active online sex workers (a subset of indoor workers) who vary in their intentions to exit. Second, prior work has focused on exit stages and facilitators of and challenges to exit. This study focuses on intentions to exit and the factors that influence them. Third, prior

studies of exit have not formulated a theory of exit (Baker, Dalla, and Williamson 2010). The present study theorizes exit by drawing on social learning theory and incorporating insights from identity theory.

Differential Association

Differential association has been associated with retention in sex work. For example, research on masseuses showed that social isolation from people outside the profession and strong identification with the occupation was associated with a lower likelihood of exit (Velarde 1975). Sex workers often hide their work, reduce contact with family members, and have few social ties with people outside the sex work industry (Murphy and Venkatesh 2006). Outdoor sex workers may develop strong ties with people inside the industry, perhaps due, in part, to their weak ties with people outside the industry (Murphy 2010). Research on outdoor sex workers has shown that ending relationships with people inside the sex work industry may facilitate exit (Oselin 2009; Sanders 2007). In contrast, indoor sex workers may have little contact with peer sex workers and experience loneliness (Murphy and Venkatesh 2006; Parsons et al. 2007). Davies and Evans (2007) examined a small sample of online interactions between sex workers, but researchers have not investigated online sex workers' relationships with each other more broadly. The newly emerged online forums for sex workers may mitigate against social isolation and loneliness among sex workers and facilitate relationships that operate to retain workers in the industry.

The internet has transformed the nature of sex workers' relationships with people in the sex work industry (Murphy and Venkatesh 2006), but research has not yet

investigated online sex workers' relationships with people in the industry generally and the effect of those relationships on exit specifically. In the past, sex workers were typically trained by another sex worker or a pimp who taught them rules for interacting with consumers and other sex workers (Bryan 1965). Trainers taught novice sex workers that it is natural for sex workers to manipulate consumers because consumers try to take advantage of sex workers (Heyl 1977). Although not all sex workers embraced the ideology they were taught (Bryan 1965; 1966), "gigantic rivers of hostility" between sex workers and consumers often existed (Caukins and Coombs 1976: 446). Sex workers often violated the rules for interacting with each other due to hostile rivalries and even had physical altercations (Bryan 1966; Romenesko and Miller 1989). One sex worker said, "there's never a real close friendship...they will do anything for each other. But...they'll slit your throat at times" (Bryan 1966: 449). The current study examines online sex workers' ties to sex workers and consumers relative to their ties to people outside the sex work industry and assesses how these ties relate to the sex workers' intentions to exit from sex work.

Definitions Favorable to Sex Work

Definitions of sex work are related to involvement in sex work. For example, a study of male sex workers found that those who advanced rapidly from their initial transactions to full-time involvement in sex work defined sex work as rewarding and "an acceptable pursuit" and did not feel guilty about engaging in sex work, even when they recognized that the public viewed their work unfavorably (Luckenbill 1985: 145). Research conducted in Indonesia found that sex workers who had favorable definitions of

sex work and did not feel guilty about engaging in it had no intentions of exiting from sex work (Sedyaningsih-Mamahit 1999). Rosen and Venkatesh (2008) found that outdoor sex workers in an inner-city U.S. neighborhood became involved in sex work not because they were desperate for money, but because they had positive definitions of sex work and frequent opportunities to engage in it. They defined sex work as an acceptable activity because they had a high degree of exposure to sex workers before entering the industry.

Defining sex work as a career is associated with a lower likelihood of exit (Bryan 1966; Murphy and Venkatesh 2006). Sagarin and Jolly (1983) asserted that sex workers do not have careers because the work lacked attributes such as skill development and performance evaluations. Bimbi (2007) detailed research (Luckenbill 1985; Robinson and Davies 1991; Visano 1991; Van der Poel 1992; Weisburg 1985) that responded to Sagarin and Jolly's assertion by documenting the career-orientations of sex workers. Bernstein (2007b) found a hierarchy among outdoor sex workers that was based on the rates they charged and their geographic location within a red-light district. Sex workers who charged relatively high prices were most likely to define sex work as a career (Bernstein 2007b). Their strategies for maintaining career-orientations involved keeping their work lives separate from their personal lives. For instance, sex workers commuted to the red-light district from residential areas and changed into their uniforms at work (Bernstein 2007b).

Sex workers who have middle-class backgrounds (a.k.a. middle-class sex workers) are particularly likely to define sex work as a career, and to develop career-orientations. Middle-class people use their cultural capital to turn marginalized jobs into

professional ones (Bernstein 2007a). Sex workers, especially middle-class ones, have professionalized their work in various ways, such as by educating sex workers on strategies for disease prevention, disseminating to sex workers information about financial investments, the law, and job hazards, and developing tools to increase their earnings, such as techniques in massage, breathing, and interpersonal communication (Bernstein 2007a). Middle-class sex workers are more likely to have and thus, draw upon prior or concurrent employment experience to improve their customer service and marketing (Bernstein 2007a).

Murphy and Venkatesh (2006) argued that sex workers could have a career-orientation, despite having limited opportunities for career mobility. Their tenure increased when sex workers anticipated career advancement, and Murphy and Venkatesh (2006) reasoned that the career-orientation of indoor sex workers caused them to devalue legal work and to delay exit. However, Murphy and Venkatesh (2006) emphasized that even sex workers who were unconcerned with career mobility might define sex work as a career if it gave them personal fulfilment. The present study examines how sex workers' definitions of sex work relate to their intentions to exit from sex work.

Differential Reinforcement: Benefits and Costs of Sex Work

Previous research has documented benefits of indoor sex work, including scheduling flexibility, autonomy, relatively high income in relatively few hours, and enhanced self-esteem (Bernstein 2007a; Bryan 1966; Murphy and Venkatesh 2006; Parsons et al. 2007). Sex workers often think of themselves as therapists and people who provide comfort to consumers (Bryan 1966; Lindemann 2011) and enhanced self-esteem

arises from the belief that sex work provides valuable services (Murphy and Venkatesh 2006). When online sex workers derived intrinsic reward from sex work in the form of personal fulfillment and enhanced self-esteem, their sex worker identities were prominent, and they had difficulty exiting sex work regardless of their original financial reasons for engaging in sex work (Murphy and Venkatesh 2006).

Some costs of engaging in sex work are involvement with police, exposure to disease, rape, robbery, and assault by consumers (Silbert and Pines 1981; Weitzer 2005). Indoor sex workers have less exposure to police and violence than do outdoor sex workers (Weitzer 2005). Sex workers may report high levels of job satisfaction if their legal and physical risks are manageable. Weitzer (2005) cited a dozen studies that found indoor sex workers generally enjoyed their jobs whereas outdoor sex workers did not, but Weitzer did not examine intentions to exit. Online sex workers today have numerous strategies at their disposal for managing risk and reducing the perceived costs of engaging in sex work. Like the sex workers in Davies and Evans's (2007) research, participants in the present study may use the internet for relatively easy screening of potential consumers and to share information about dangerous consumers. If they reduce the perceived costs of sex work through use of technologies, they may have no intention to exit.

Macroeconomic data suggest that the opportunity costs of engaging in sex work influence sex workers' decisions to engage in and exit from sex work (Moffat and Peters 2004; Rocha et al. 2010). Likewise, Rosen and Venkatesh (2008) found that outdoor sex workers selected sex work as their occupation because it compared favorably to

alternative available jobs for which they were qualified (i.e., the opportunity costs of engaging in sex work were low). Online sex workers also lamented that alternative work would provide them with less income and autonomy than does sex work (Murphy and Venkatesh 2006), but the opportunity costs of engaging in sex work increase and differential reinforcement for sex work declines as sex workers age. Typically, sex workers are aware that their marketability declines beyond a certain age (Romenesko and Miller 1989). Sex workers sometimes speak of a “shelf life” that limits their earning power (Sanders 2007) and sex worker hourly rates begin dropping after age 20 (Moffat and Peters 2004). Furthermore, the cost of foregone romantic relationships rises as sex workers advance beyond an age at which people typically start families. Sex workers might also perceive that the opportunity cost of sex work increases as they surpass the age when most people enter the traditional workforce and establish career trajectories.

Rosen and Venkatesh (2008) used the term “satisficing” to argue that outdoor sex workers often engage in sex work to satisfy immediate needs (e.g., money for survival and flexible scheduling), but sex work does not offer long-term stability or financial security. Sex work appears to be a good fit for the person in that it satisfies basic needs, but sex work provides just enough benefits to prevent sex workers from seeking alternative employment that might maximize their long-term utility (Rosen and Venkatesh 2008). In some instances, the rational choice to engage in sex work is bounded by a person’s limited training, education, and local employment opportunities, and in other instances by limited awareness of alternative opportunities (Rosen and Venkatesh 2008). The present study argues that sex workers who have low job satisfaction as a

result of satisfying immediate desires and needs will be more likely to intend to exit than sex workers who do not.

Relationship conflict can reduce the perceived benefits of sex work. Scholars have identified that sex workers may experience conflict between their role as sex worker and their role as mother, and that the conflict motivates exit (Månsson and Hedin 1999; Oselin 2010). Some sex workers report hating their jobs because they feel like they are bad mothers (Månsson and Hedin 1999; Oselin 2010). However, other research shows that sex workers often prefer sex work over other work because it offers flexibility and autonomy that eases the burdens of childcare and does not conflict with numerous responsibilities (Rosen and Venkatesh 2008). Whelehan (2001) found that sex workers perceived sex work to be rewarding if the flexible and abbreviated schedule allowed them to pursue personal goals, such as going to school, writing, or opening a business. Murphy and Venkatesh (2006) found that sex worker tenure negatively correlated with relationship conflict. Participants in their study said that they would exit if sex work conflicted with parenting, and participants who had no intentions of exiting said that sex work was compatible with parenting and that they made large investments into sex work. The present study evaluates the costs and benefits of online sex work as they relate to intentions to exit.

Differential Emotional Reinforcement. Murphy and Venkatesh (2006) found that sex workers were less likely to consider exiting from sex work if sex work allowed them to express important personal attributes that consumers recognized and appreciated. One of Murphy and Venkatesh's participants said, "I enjoy making others happy" (2006: 141)

and because sex work provided an environment for her to get feedback from other people who appreciated that she was “nice” and “gentle”, sex work increased her self-esteem. Another participant explained that when consumers appreciate the care she provides, sex work “makes me feel special” (Murphy and Venkatesh 2006: 142). A third participant enjoyed sex work because having “good bonds” with consumers helped her to verify that she was “good at it” (Murphy and Venkatesh 2006: 142). These findings support the present study’s hypothesis that sex workers who experience emotional reinforcement while engaged in sex work will be unlikely to exit.

Challenges with Emotional Labor, a Cost of Sex Work. Emotional labor is “the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and body display” that produces “the proper state of mind in others” (Hochschild 1983:7). Hochschild (1983) documented how airline workers engaged in emotional labor through the use of deep acting techniques to produce happy passengers. When workers conduct deep acting, they draw upon props, emotion memories, and “as if suppositions” (e.g., approaching strangers as if they are mom) to generate within themselves sincere feelings (Hochschild 1983:106-113). Airline workers acted as if the airplane cabin was a family room filled with personal guests, reconceived of stressful passengers as helpless to feel within themselves sympathy rather than anger, and used language that disarmed passengers of their anger (Hochschild 1983). Bernstein (2007) used Hochschild’s analysis of acting to explain how sex workers display and produce emotion to create authentic interpersonal connections. Following Hochschild’s (1983) model, the current study examines sex workers’ perceptions of the costs of engaging in emotional labor to either create authentic

interpersonal connections or meet demands common to many service-oriented jobs, such as the need to deescalate negative emotions.

Sex workers are financially rewarded for creating authentic interpersonal connections and/or managing consumer affect by displaying appropriate emotions (Bernstein 2010; Cabezas 2009; Hoang 2010; Parreñas 2010; Rocha et al. 2010). Consumer reviews give the highest scores to sex workers who create authentic interpersonal connections (Holt and Blevins 2007). Sex workers who provide “bounded authenticity” act as though encounters with consumers are non-commercial while maintaining professional and emotional boundaries between themselves and consumers (Bernstein 2007). Similarly, in the airline industry, “relations based on getting and giving money are to be seen as if they were relations free of money” (Hochschild 1983: 106). Like flight attendants who use deep acting to increase revenues for airlines (Hochschild 1983), sex workers must sound sincere to maximize the revenues they receive from consumers (Heyl 1977). Appearing to enjoy the job helps produce satisfied consumers in both industries, and revealing that “To show enjoyment takes effort is to do the job poorly” (Hochschild 1983: 8).

Prolonged use of emotion management strategies in the workplace can desensitize people to emotional stimuli in their personal lives (Hochschild 1983). Workers may also feel “phony” when they separate their roles as workers from their real selves (Hochschild 1983: 21). However, sex workers must avoid becoming alienated from themselves and maintain distinct workplace and personal identities (Bernstein 2010; Day 2007; Parsons et al. 2007). If they are not good at depersonalizing interactions and they identify too

closely with the job, performing emotional labor may cause workers to burn out (Hochschild 1983). It may also be challenging for sex workers to keep consumers grounded in reality when selling them fantasy, maintain personal boundaries between themselves and consumers, manufacture affection or repress contempt for difficult consumers, and establish rules of interaction with consumers (Bernstein 2010; Cabezas 2009; Hoang 2010; Parreñas 2010). It can be difficult to disguise material interest in interacting with a consumer as authentic interest, and sex workers who act as if they have authentic interest may have difficulty reminding consumers of the commercial nature of their relationship.

Hochschild (1983) traced an ongoing struggle between labor and management, which was largely a negotiation over the quantity of sincere emotion that is due to consumers. Hochschild said, “Where the customer is king, unequal exchanges are normal, and from the beginning customer and client assume different rights to feeling and display. The ledger is supposedly evened by a wage” (1983: 86). Buchanan (2005) discovered that like flight attendants, call center employees had to suppress their anger when talking to irate consumers, and supervisors directed them to smile. Although these challenges drove many workers to search for jobs elsewhere, other employees remained because their wage was greater than they could find at alternative workplaces. Because online sex workers are generally not employees and not subject to the authority of management, consumers are the only parties who might expect them to perform emotional labor. The current study asks sex workers whether, why, and how they manage their emotions and seek to influence consumers’ emotions. Sex workers may use the

same emotion management strategies that people in other industries learn from their employers, and these strategies may have similar costs.

Little prior work examines the emotional labor performed by online sex workers. One exception is Bernstein (2007a; 2010). However, her work did not connect emotional labor to exit. Furthermore, her (2007a) participants engaged in sex work between 1994 and 2002, prior to the vast expansion of online sex work. The present study elaborates on existing literature by examining how challenges associated with emotional labor in sex work may contribute to the exit intentions of online sex workers. Furthermore, whereas Bernstein focused on emotional labor unique to sex work (i.e., providing bounded authenticity), the current study examines challenges related to suppressing negative emotions and dealing with irate consumers. The recent proliferation of online consumer reviews has created opportunities and challenges for sex workers by affecting their marketplace reputations and revenue. Sex workers who experience negative consequences of emotional labor and/or have difficulty performing emotional labor may want to exit from sex work.

III. Research Design and Methods

Design

This study involved semi-structured, one-time interviews. Deductive analysis was employed to test hypotheses. Inductive analysis was employed to identify alternative explanations and explore cases that deviated from the expected patterns.

Interview sample

The sample consisted of female online sex workers who charged rates for their services that fall in the middle-range of sex work rates – that is, between \$180 and \$400 per hour. As such, they earned more than enough money to survive but were not wealthy. The sex workers in this study served a mainstream male clientele and did not operate in fetish niches, such as massage, foot and shoe worship, armpit worship, urination and defecation, cross dressing, toilet play, bondage, domination, sadism, and masochism. They had what are referred to as “menus”, or lists of services provided for a fee. All of them advertised that they offer penis-to-vagina intercourse with condoms (a.k.a. “Covered Full Service” (CFS)) and some form of oral sex. The sample excluded sex workers who are male or transgender and sex workers who only offered computer-mediated sex such as via webcams. Participants were not asked about their sexual orientation, but some of their commercial transactions with male consumers may include an additional female sex worker. The sample size was 27, which is near the median sample size of prior research with indoor and outdoor sex workers (Oselin 2010; Dalla 2001; Månsson and Hedin 1999; Bernstein 2007; Murphy 2010; Karandikar and Próspero 2010).

As in Murphy and Venkatesh (2006), the sample in this study included current sex workers, not sex workers who wanted to and did exit sex work. Therefore, the sample likely yielded data that revealed a fuller range of challenges to exit and reasons for remaining at work than has been found in prior research on exit which relied on samples of sex workers who had already exited from the industry.

Source of participants

Study participants were recruited from a website that connects female sex workers in the United States with male consumers. The website, which was established in 2005, is not named here to protect participants' identities. Users of the website include sex workers and consumers. Unlike other websites that connect sex workers with consumers which merely provide advertisements, consumer reviews, and/or private messaging systems (e.g., The Erotic Review, <http://www.theeroticreview.com/main.asp>), the website used for this study combines advertising and consumer reviews with social networking features of sites like Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/>). Members have profile pages with daily updates, descriptions of their hobbies and other personal attributes. Members communicate with one another using a personal messaging system which works like email. The website also hosts public discussion threads, or blogs. Anybody who has access to the internet can view these public blogs and browse the classified advertisements, including an escort section that contains offers of companionship from sex workers. However, people have to purchase a \$25 website membership if they want to comment on blogs and/or utilize the personal messaging system.

The feature that most distinguishes the website from similar websites that contain advertisements for sex work is its formal system of networking. Members who join another member's network on the site rate that member along several dimensions, including safety, and are, thus, accountable to other members for that person's behavior. Sex work consumers who are members of the website look at the network of a sex worker who is a website member, and send personal messages to other consumers to ask about the sex worker's service, before contacting her for an appointment. If a consumer contacts a sex worker for an appointment, the sex worker can examine the consumer's network to determine whether to accept the request. The sex worker can also message other sex workers to ask for more information about the consumer.

The site has private "clubs" with restricted access that allow members to discuss sex work, which is a forbidden topic in public blogs. People interested in accessing a private club click a button to request that the club owner grant membership. Some clubs are restricted to males, while others are restricted to females. In addition, many clubs are unlisted, available to members only by invitation from the owner; the only way that members hear about them is through word of mouth. Website members may meet in person for parties and/or commercial exchanges.

I found the website in March of 2010, after reading an article about Russian deviance (Aral, Lawrence, Dyatlov, and Kozlov 2005) that mentioned a similar website. I purchased a membership so that I could send messages to other members and ask questions about the online community. I began to comment on public blogs and joined clubs that had liberal admission criteria. I got along well with some website members and

began exchanging personal messages with several male members. Eventually, I was invited into more exclusive clubs. When sex workers posted blogs that solicited assistance, such as a ride from Ontario to Anaheim, I volunteered so that I could gain their trust. I went in person to parties where I met dozens of consumers and sex workers, and my online network grew. My experience with the website facilitated the research by providing access to interview participants.

Sampling

In prior research recruitment occurred by emailing sex workers who posted ads on various websites (Parsons et al. 2001; Parsons et al. 2007; Uy et al. 2004; Walby 2010), inviting sex workers in the researcher's personal network, established through participant observation, and/or by inviting participation from people referred by participants (i.e., snowball sampling) (Bernstein 2007b). The recruitment in this study occurred by sending invitations to a sample of convenience through the personal messaging system at the website described above.

I created a list of potential participants, first adding the 37 sex workers with whom I had interacted online. Then, I added to the list as I developed new online contacts during the recruitment period. Whether I identified potential participants before or after the recruitment period began, my recruitment procedure was the same. Invitations to participate in the study were sent via online personal message at the website. Before inviting participation in the study, however, I made at least one contact through personal message or text message. This initial contact largely served to establish rapport, but it also addressed several challenges. I wanted to be sure that the person saw the invitation

when I sent it. Then, I would assume that if the person did not respond to the invitation when sent later, she was ignoring that attempt to contact her. That way, I would not send an invitation multiple times and possibly annoy the person. In addition, this practice reduced the likelihood that a person would post negatively about the study on the website. For example, if an invitation recipient were, for some reason, upset by the study invitation, she might post a blog on the website to complain, thereby dissuading other people from participating. So, the online exchanges prior to sending invitations gave me some sense of potential participants' receptiveness to the study invitation.

Only five of the thirty-seven members on the initial list of potential participants agreed to participate. I, therefore, had to substantially expand the list over time. The website accounts (i.e., membership profile pages) of seven members on the original list disappeared from the website before recruitment began. Four other members retained their accounts but had no apparent activity on the website during the recruitment period (i.e., they did not post advertisements, update their profiles, or comment on blogs). One member on the original list of potential participants did not respond to my initial contact, and I, therefore, did not send her a recruitment invitation. Two members had online activity at the beginning of the recruitment period, and I contacted them once but then abandoned recruitment efforts when their online activity ceased. I had occasional contact with eleven members on the original list of potential participants, but I did not send them invitations because they were rarely within my geographic vicinity, making an interview infeasible. For instance, they were in Las Vegas, San Diego, or touring other states. Two members declined to participate, and five others did not respond to the invitations.

Thirty-two of the 58 invitation recipients (and of the 97 potential recipients) agreed to participate. Of the 97 potential participants I attempted to contact for the purpose of establishing rapport before inviting to participate in the study, 8 did not respond, and 31 others were either never in Southern California or gave responses that indicated they might be likely to discuss the project negatively with other potential participants if I sent them invitations to participate. I sent invitations to the remaining 58, and 26 either did not respond to the invitation or declined it. Finally, 32 accepted the invitation to participate; 27 of them completed an interview. Sending an invitation more than twenty-four hours ahead of the time that I wanted to conduct an interview rarely resulted in completion of an interview. The most effective strategy was to send invitations in the morning, wait for responses, and attempt to complete the interview that day. Participants would often agree to meet in the afternoon, and then reschedule several times before we conducted the interview in the evening.

Sample descriptives

Table 1 shows the distribution of the 27 participants by characteristics that are potentially related to a sex worker's perceptions of exit: age, tenure as a sex worker (i.e., years in the industry), self-reported race/ethnicity, family-of-origin socioeconomic status, and personality (Holt and Blevins 2007; Moffat and Peters 2004; Pruitt and Krull 2010). Age and tenure influence how sex workers view their work in that older sex workers and sex workers with longer tenures are more like to view their job as emotionally and physically taxing (Oselin 2010; Sanders 2007). Family-of-origin socioeconomic status has been found to influence sex workers' views of themselves and other sex workers, and

their approach to the emotional labor in their work; sex workers from higher socioeconomic status families are more likely to define sex work as a career, attract consumers who demand emotional labor, and engage in deep acting to produce authentic interpersonal connections (Bernstein 2007b; Hoang 2010). Like the other variables described in this section, personality is related to a sex worker's marketability. Personality is potentially related to a sex worker's intentions to exit in that her ability to generate revenue will determine her level of reward, and consumers generally favor extroverted sex workers (Pruitt and Krull 2010).

The participants ranged in age from 19 to 38 years old. The average age was 24.8 ($SD = 5.0$). Participants varied in their sex work tenure, ranging from 1 year to 9 years, with an average of 3.9 ($SD = 2.4$). The sample breakdown by respondents' self-reported race/ethnicity was: 16 White, 3 Latina, 3 Black, 2 Middle-eastern, 2 Mixed race/ethnicity, and 1 Asian. How this distribution compares to the population of online sex workers is unknown since there are no definitive figures on its composition.

Family-of-origin socioeconomic status was indicated by parents' occupation. Seven participants came from upper-class families. Eleven participants came from middle-class families. Nine participants came from lower-class families.

Personality was determined by asking participants to describe themselves. Nine participants used adjectives that indicated they are introverts and eighteen participants used adjectives that indicated they are extroverts.

Interviews

The interviews ranged in length from 45 to 130 minutes and resulted in 1,054 pages of interview transcripts. In accordance with the procedures of other researchers who interviewed sex workers (Murphy 2010; Sanders 2007; Walby 2010), the interviews were held in locations chosen by participants. I tried to ensure that the locations were quiet and private enough to offer confidentiality and presented little chance of interruption (Mikecz 2012). There was only one instance where confidentiality was momentarily jeopardized by a stranger intruding on the interview space, at a Starbucks, and we resolved this problem by moving to a different table, away from that person. Background noise at an outdoor location made transcription of one interview more difficult but did not interfere with the conversation itself. As anticipated, many participants wanted to hold the interviews during a break in their workday, and I agreed to meet with them at their workplace because the locations had to be highly accessible (Mikecz 2012). For example, three interviews took place in hotel rooms while the participants ate dinner. Interviews conducted in natural settings, such as respondents' workplace, allow researchers to discover important clues about participants (Mikecz 2012). In total, fourteen interviews were conducted in hotels, eight in homes, and five at outdoor eateries.

Like Sanders (2007), I obtained verbal informed consent prior to starting the interview. As needed, I adjusted the sequence of interview questions based on answers to prior questions (Savage and Callery 2007). In addition, as themes emerged during the data collection period, I modified the protocol for subsequent participants (Mayring 2007;

Savage and Callery 2007). In part, this entailed revising question wording based on suggestions from participants. For example, the first participant told me not to use the word “adjective” in a question about how the participants describe themselves because it felt like a grammar test. Also, once response types emerged, I incorporated them into probes. For example, when asking participants what they would miss if they exited sex work, I mentioned that some other participants said that they would miss their relationships with consumers.

Following Warren and Karner (2005), I kept my talking during the interview to a minimum, relied heavily on gestures, such as nodding and smiling, as a way to encourage responses, and adjusted my level of dialogue based on how talkative participants were, elaborating more upon the meaning of questions when participants gave short responses, and remaining silent when participants offered monologues that answered numerous questions. It was important for me to demonstrate respect for their perspectives and for them as people because this type of deference is the basis for empathy (Warren and Karner 2005). The interviewer must use labels and gestures carefully and risks losing rapport if the respondent’s definition of the situation is not upheld (Walby 2010). For instance, rather than employing the label “sex worker” during interviews, I used whatever title the participants adopted. I also learned that it was useful to apologize in advance if a question sounded redundant in that the participant has already addressed it while answering a prior question.

I acknowledged that certain questions could be difficult to answer and reminded participants they could skip any questions they did not want to answer because the

interviewer must constantly read the respondent's gestures, and revert to easier questions if the respondent appears uncomfortable (Warren and Karner 2005). Researchers can ruin rapport by being false (Ganga and Scott 2006), but with proper interviewing technique interviewees can perceive outsider interviewers to be non-threatening and impartial (Ganga and Scott 2006; Mikecz 2012). Like Mikecz (2012), I found common ground with participants. We began the interview with general background questions, and I could often personally identify with something that participants shared about their lives or their families. Also, many of their anecdotes about workplace experiences were relatable to any workplace, and I could honestly tell them I had been through similar situations, such as in a classroom where I taught.

Walby (2010) found that sex workers may define the research encounter as a business exchange. Sensitive to this issue, I told potential participants before I ever sent them invitations to participate that although I am a male with a membership at a website where sex workers advertise, I was not looking for sex work services. For their participation in my study, participants received \$50 and entry into a drawing for the chance to win a \$150 gift card, which is common incentive for sex worker interview participation (Dalla 2006; Jackson, Bennett, and Sowinski 2007; Katsulis et al. 2010; Murphy 2010; Parsons et al. 2007; Walby 2010; Williamson and Baker 2009). Unlike in the case of Walby's research (2010), none of my participants flirted with me or otherwise attempted to solicit business from me during the interview. One advantage I had in this regard was that respondents viewed me as a community member (Price 2010; Mikecz 2012) since I was a frequent participant in online discussions at the site where the

participants advertised their sex work services. Participants often acknowledged my familiarity with their norms when using conversational shorthand such as, “you know how it is.” I would affirm that I understood, but I would still often ask them to elaborate just to be certain that I understood correctly.

Researchers always have some power over their participants and usually have greater social status (Sands and Krumer-Nevo 2006). A researcher’s positionality is most problematic when the power differential results in suppression of the participant’s voice (Sands and Krumer-Nevo 2006). Any interviewer must anticipate that participants will resist being “othered” by giving responses that do not fit preconceived narratives (Sands and Krumer-Nevo 2006). I thus asked participants to elaborate on responses that countered my assumptions and allowed them to present multiple subjectivities, rather than pressing them to confirm my hypotheses, which is a common mistake (Sands and Krumer-Nevo 2006). When reflecting on his positionality as a male who studied females, Takeda (2012) argued that it was important to view their lives as multifaceted and unique, rather than forcing interpretations of behavior to match prefabricated frames from existing literature. Researchers can achieve this by questioning their assumptions and embracing negative cases (Brooks 2012; St. Louis and Barton 2002). At the end of some interviews, I explicitly shared my hypotheses with participants who seemed to be negative cases, welcomed their critique, and revised my tentative conclusions accordingly.

The digital audio recordings of interviews were transcribed into WORD documents by myself and four trained undergraduate research assistants. All interviews

were transcribed verbatim and proofread multiple times to maximize the accuracy of transcription. Pauses, laughs, false starts, and the like were all recorded in the transcripts.

Interview protocol

Appendix A contains the interview protocol which consists of thirty-five questions. Next to each question is a label that indicates the construct the question aims to capture. These constructs are portrayed in the conceptual model in Appendix B and their measurement is described below, after the description of the data analysis. Note that the protocol contains some questions on goal incongruence. However, the results presented here do not address goal incongruence as it was determined to be beyond the scope of the research questions.

Data analysis

Overview of Analysis Phases. Data analysis consisted of two phases. First, constructs were created from responses to interview questions that were designed to capture the constructs. Second, relations between constructs were examined to test the study's hypotheses. Each of the phases contained a series of steps that are detailed below. Interview data can be analyzed by searching for "meaningful units (that) may come from prespecified frameworks," and "preunderstandings, such as formal theory or constructs, can guide the formation of categories" (Bradley 1993: 445). Because I had a priori constructs linked together in a conceptual model (see Appendix B), I identified these constructs in the interview responses, thus engaging in a deductive analysis (Grange and Kerr 2010; Kerr and Males 2010) with a directed approach (Hsieh and Shannon 2005). I examined patterns to draw conclusions about the hypothesized relations between these

constructs. However, when cases deviated from the hypothesized patterns, I employed inductive analysis to explain them.

Semi-structured interview questions were used to qualitatively measure constructs that have typically been quantitatively measured with survey questions. Those survey questions were examined, converted into open-ended questions, and elaborated upon by inserting probes to generate descriptions of constructs (e.g. the types of reinforcement experienced and the types of differential associations). The operationalization of constructs employed primarily deductive methods but also allowed for capturing the richness of constructs. Whereas previous tests of Social Learning Theory have used quantitative measures of constructs, the present study's open-ended interview questions about differential association and differential reinforcement maximized construct validity by enabling study participants to report the full range of attributes within the domains of these constructs. Social Learning Theory has a quantitative focus but lends itself well to qualitative investigation because the qualitative elements of its variables may account for variation in crime. For example, intensity of social ties refers to the quality of a person's ties. In addition, we learn about the connection between differential reinforcement and crime more by examining the types of benefits and costs that relate to crime than by focusing on levels of net benefit.

Phase One: Construct Development. To develop the constructs for analysis, my first analysis was within subject. For each participant, I assigned codes for each variable by looking within the interview transcript for answers. Often, the codes could be identified in the participant's response to the prompts that were designed to elicit the

data. However, the entire interview was reviewed for information before a code was assigned. So I summarized the responses to each item and recorded the summaries in a spreadsheet. My second analysis was between subjects and within constructs. I examined all 27 cases and attempted to identify themes or categories. Then, I reread each transcript to see if the initial assigned code was appropriate and whether other themes were suggested (Nehlin, Nyberg, and Oster 2015).

To give an example, the variable “intensity of ties to other people” was created. I summarized the responses of each participant to question #30 on the interview protocol, which asks about relationships with anybody who is not a consumer or another sex worker. I included any relevant information that appeared in other places within the transcript. Participants, for instance, often discussed relationships with parents when responding to a question that asks if they perceive sex work to be immoral. Some participants said that they avoided their parents because they felt guilty about being sex workers, and I included the response “distant from family” in the code for “intensity of ties to other people.” Next, I examined all 27 cases and identified categories of common responses to this item, including relationship status with intimate partners, feelings about siblings and parents, feelings about “civi girls” (i.e., women outside the sex work industry), and which of these people, if any, knows that the participant is a sex worker. Finally, I reread each transcript to see if I could find codes for each of these categories of response. This step was necessary because some categories did not emerge in response to item #30 until the transcripts from the final interviews were coded.

Phase Two: Analysis of Relations between Constructs. Once the constructs were created, I analyzed relations between them to test the hypotheses. For instance, it was hypothesized that sex worker identity prominence would be negatively associated with intentions to exit. To test this hypothesis, I examined whether participants differed in their intentions to exit based on their identity prominence (low, moderate, and high). If the expected pattern was found, I inductively analyzed any negative cases to identify reasons for deviating from the pattern. If the expected pattern was not found, I inductively analyzed the cases to identify reasons for the absence of the pattern.

Constructs

Detailed examples of the constructs and their categories are presented in Chapter 5.

Differential association – intensity of social ties to consumers and sex workers relative to people outside the sex work industry. The measure of intensity of ties was based on participants' descriptions of the types of their social ties to consumers, the closeness and importance of these ties, the types of their social ties to sex workers, the closeness and importance of these ties, their perceptions of their similarity to other sex workers, the types of their social ties to people outside of the sex work industry, and the closeness and importance of these ties. These descriptions were found primarily in participants' responses to questions (#25, 27, and 30) about participants' current and past relationships with consumers, sex workers, friends, and family. Participants were coded as having either weak, moderate, or strong intensity of ties. If the intensity of ties to consumers and sex workers was matched or exceeded in intensity by ties to people

outside the industry, then they were coded as having weak ties. They were coded as having moderate or strong ties to consumers and sex workers relative to people outside the industry if the intensity of their ties to the outsiders was weaker than the intensity of ties to insiders.

Differential association – exposure to participants in the sex work industry.

Participants were asked about their levels of exposure to consumers and other sex workers through reading their online dialogue on the sex work website and the volume of their communication with consumers and sex workers (questions #12-14). The measure of exposure was based on participants' descriptions of their exposure to sex work consumers, exposure to other sex workers, and the time they spend reading blogs written by other sex workers and consumers. Participants were coded as having low, moderate, or high exposure.

Definitions favorable to sex work. Participants were asked about what tasks are involved in their sex work, whether their work and their satisfaction with the work had changed over the past year, and whether they considered sex work to be immoral (questions #6-9). These items assess the multiple poles (e.g., appropriate/inappropriate, moral/immoral, desirable/undesirable, and good/bad) of definitions of acts (Akers and Jensen 2009). The measure of definitions was based on participants' descriptions of their job tasks in either positive or negative terms and whether they experience guilt for engaging in sex work. Four categories of definitions emerged from the data: very favorable definitions, favorable definitions, unfavorable definitions, and very unfavorable definitions. The participants who had very favorable definitions listed being sociable,

being a friend, pleasing people, networking, and/or counseling among their job duties, and they did not perceive sex work to be immoral. The participants who had favorable definitions did not include any of these duties in their job descriptions, but they did not perceive sex work to be immoral. The participants who had unfavorable definitions also listed being sociable, being a friend, pleasing people, networking, and/or counseling among their job duties, but they felt guilty about engaging in sex work and perceived it to be wrong or immoral. The participants who had very unfavorable definitions did not include any of these duties in their job descriptions and perceived sex work to be wrong or immoral.

Differential reinforcement – benefits and costs of sex work. Participants were asked what they liked and disliked about sex work and their overall level of satisfaction with sex work (question #8). The latter question is consistent with quantitative measures of SLT’s “overall reinforcement balance,” used in studies of other criminal behavior, which ask participants if the benefits of a crime exceed the costs (Akers 2009). A job likes (i.e., benefits) variable was assessed in combination with a dislikes (i.e., costs) variable and job satisfaction variable to create a single measure of net benefits. There were two categories: participants who described the benefits as exceeding the costs of sex work (i.e., benefitters) and participants who described the costs as exceeding the benefits of sex work (i.e., non-benefitters). Benefitters are distinguished from non-benefitters by the quality, not the quantity, of benefits and costs they experienced as well as by their rating of job satisfaction (greater than eight or less than eight on a scale of one to ten).

Differential reinforcement – differential emotional reinforcement. Participants were asked about the emotions they experience while working (question #21). The measure of differential emotional reinforcement had two categories: mostly positive emotions and mostly negative emotions. Participants who experienced mostly positive emotions reported having feelings of happiness, excitement, and derivations of these emotions at work. Participants who experienced mostly negative emotions reported having feelings of anger, sadness, fear, frustration, nervousness, loneliness, and derivations of these emotions at work. Although some participants listed both positive and negative emotions, each participant's list of emotions was weighted in one direction or the other.

Differential reinforcement – emotional labor costs. Participants were asked about their strategies for and the challenges posed by managing emotions, providing bounded authenticity in transactions with consumers, and establishing boundaries between fantasy and reality and between work and personal life (questions #21-24). The measure of emotional labor costs has two categories: participants who reported experiencing costs of emotional labor and participants who did not experience any costs of emotional labor.

Sex worker identity commitment. Participants were asked what they would be giving up if they exited sex work immediately and if they would find another way to keep being sex workers if advertising online was no longer an option (question #32). The measure of sex worker identity commitment had three categories: low, moderate, and high. Participants with low sex worker identity commitment reported that income was all they would lose if they stopped engaging in sex work, and that the loss of income would

not be a problem for them. Participants with moderate sex worker identity commitment reported that they would miss the interactions and/or relationships they had with consumers if they stopped engaging in sex work. Participants with high sex worker identity commitment reported that if they stopped engaging in sex work, they would have to give up many things.

Sex worker identity prominence. Participants were asked how important being a sex worker is to them, relative to their other roles (Stryker and Serpe 1994), and if that had changed over the past year (question #20). The measure of sex worker identity prominence had three categories: low, moderate, and high. Participants who had low prominence reported that the sex worker role was less important to them than all other roles. Participants who had moderate prominence reported that the sex worker role was no more or less important to them than other roles, the sex worker role was more important than some other roles, and/or being good at sex work was important to them. Participants who had high prominence reported that being a sex worker was “very important” to them and/or that they were constantly engaged in activities related to the identity.

Perceptions of exit. Participants were asked about their plans for exit, their perceptions of challenges to exit, what exit means to them, whether they view exit as positive or negative, and whether their perceptions of exit have changed over the past year (questions #32-34). A combined deductive and inductive analysis revealed the perceptions of exit construct to contain four dimensions: meaning of exit, desirability of exit, feasibility of exit, and intentions to exit.

Regarding meaning of exit, the sample divided into a group of participants who perceived exit to be a swift event that would occur when they stopped advertising their services, and another group of participants who perceived exit to slowly unfold after they stopped expanding their base of consumers. Regarding desirability, participants also divided into categories of those who perceived exit to be desirable, undesirable, and neither desirable nor undesirable. Regarding feasibility, some participants perceived exit to be feasible, and others perceived exit to be infeasible, based upon challenges associated with exiting and retention factors. Regarding exit intentions, some participants had no imminent or definite intentions to exit sex work, and others intended to exit within five years. Participants in the latter group varied in their timeframes for exiting, with most intending to exit in less than two years, and some even intending to exit in less than six months. Since the study defined exit a priori as complete cessation of engaging in sex work, the hypothesis tests employed a dichotomous variable measuring intentions to exit. It had two categories: those intending to exit (i.e., exiters) and those not intending to exit. The distinction between the two groups is that exiters expressed having an imminent and/or definite timeframe for exiting and participants in the other group did not.

Participant demographics. Demographic information was captured by four questions (#1-4). Participants reported their age in years. Family-of-origin socioeconomic status was determined by participants' report of their parents' occupation. The Nam-Powers-Boyd occupational status index (Nam and Boyd 2004) was used to convert occupations into class codes. The index has been frequently used in recent research (Banerjee and Phan 2015; Grossmann and Varnum 2015; Scott, Ingram, Zagencyk and

Shoss 2015; Signorello, Cohen, Williams, Munro, Hargreaves, and Blot 2014).

Participants self-identified in terms of race/ethnicity.

Ethical Issues

Risks of participation in the study included emotional distress, due to the process of introspection that interviewing entails, and legal and/or social consequences associated with admitting involvement in the sex work industry, since sex work is an illegal activity. To address these risks, I had a printed list of psychological resource referrals available in the event of emotional distress during an interview. I used pseudonyms during interview transcription and in this report so that participants' responses cannot be traced back to them. There was no identifying information associated with the interview audio files, which were stored on a password protected computer hard drive. I avoided legal risk by collecting data in spots chosen by participants. Participants reported no adverse events. Benefits of participation included a \$50 stipend and entry into a raffle for a \$150 gift card. An additional possible benefit is the psychological benefit associated with the therapeutic process of discussing workplace frustrations (Månsson and Hedin 1999). Since sex workers do not have much opportunity to discuss their work (Murphy and Venkatesh 2006), the participants might have enjoyed the interviews and appreciated the opportunity to reflect on their work.

CHAPTER IV. Descriptive Results on Perceptions of Exit

This chapter reports descriptive findings about participants' perceptions of exit from sex work. First, it discusses participants' understandings of exit: what it means and how desirable it is. Second, it describes variation in intentions to exit sex work among participants. Third, it discusses participants' perceptions of exit feasibility, which are based on perceived challenges associated with exiting and retention factors.

Understandings of Exit

There was variation in how participants interpreted the meaning of exit. Specifically, there was variation in whether ceasing to advertise their sex work services constituted an exit from sex work. Furthermore, there was variation in the extent to which participants perceived of exit as a desirable event.

This study defines exit as the complete cessation of the provision of sex work services. Some participants viewed exit as ceasing to advertise – that is, ceasing to advertise sex work services would co-occur with the cessation of the provision of sex work services (see Table 2, 2nd column). Other participants viewed exit from sex work as ceasing to provide sex work services but not co-occurring with the cessation of advertising.

Meaning of exit as ceasing to advertise. Nine participants viewed exit from sex work as ceasing to advertise. They believed that when they stopped advertising their sexual services, they would also cease providing those services. For example, Sofia (22 years old, white, 1 year of experience) said that, “It’s time to give it all up, and move on...I’m planning on throwing everything away, phones, everything that’s connected to

the business.” Natalie (20 years old, Asian, 2 years of experience), Molly (19 years old, Latina, 1 year of experience), and Doris (20 years old, white, 2 years of experience) expected to permanently cease transacting with all consumers when they stopped posting advertisements because “retirement” would be an accomplishment that marked the end of one phase in their lives and the beginning of a new one. Natalie said “retirement would mean that” her sex worker persona “has died...and (Natalie) is living what she was supposed to be doing...I've succeeded.” Molly said it “means I've gotten to where I plan to be for the rest of my life... I've gotten to the top.” Doris said that, “I really want to reach my goal (i.e., achieve a milestone), and then have retirement (i.e., stop advertising), and then delete my profile” (i.e., sever her connection to the industry).

Meaning of exit as ceasing to provide services. Eighteen participants viewed exit from sex work as coinciding with circumstances that would arise sometime after ceasing to advertise. In this group, ceasing to advertise was a necessary but not sufficient step toward exit and could be associated with an incremental exit (i.e., gradual reduction in service provision). Three participants said that they would gradually reduce their base of clients before exiting. Crystal (24 years old, white, 6 years of experience) intended to “just slowly like drift out... not see new clients”, and keep seeing “regulars” as long as they adequately paid her. Until she had a child, Nina’s objective was to cultivate relationships with “high paying guys” so that she could voluntarily scale back her online marketing before aging reduced her marketability. After ceasing to advertise, Nina would continue working in dance clubs and other nightclubs. Similarly, Vicky planned to “become more exclusive: less posting, more regular people that I know, and more longer

arrangements, rather than like hours and half-hours.” In other words, Vicky (like Crystal and Nina) would decrease her advertising for sex work and transactions with strangers, and increase her transactions with consumers who paid her on a monthly rather than hourly basis. At some point later, she would cease providing services completely.

Eleven participants identified specific circumstances that would prompt an exit sometime after ceasing to advertise. Four participants reported that opening their own business would either allow or force them to exit. Wendy (22 years old, Latina, 1 year of experience) and Kelly (25 years old, white, 5 years of experience) believed that opening businesses, which they aspired to do, would force them to completely cease transacting with consumers. Wendy suggested that after she quit posting advertisements for sex work, she might be considered “semi-retired” until her business opened because she would keep her sex worker website account open in case she “really needed the money” and wanted to contact regular consumers. Kelly reasoned that although she would continue seeing regulars after she ceased to advertise, “I see myself opening my own studio and not being an escort because that will make a bad business name.” Kelly feared that people would not patronize her dance studio if they knew she was a sex worker.

Two participants reported that parenting would force them to exit. Polly (38 years old, white, 3 years of experience) said that she would stop advertising when “my prime's done” because she did not want to compete with younger sex workers and feared that she would get burned out. However, Polly intended to “be available” to her regulars until she could no longer hide sex work from her six-year old son. Nina (24 years old, white, 4

years of experience) said that she would exit if she gives birth, reasoning that, “I couldn't kiss my baby on the mouth” after a day of sex work.

Five participants cited marriage as a circumstance that would either allow or force them to exit. After ceasing to advertise, they might return to transacting with consumers or continue seeing some consumers until they got married. Chloe said, “Retirement (i.e., cessation of advertising) isn't really retirement (i.e., exit) for a girl like me, unless I'm in a relationship (i.e., married).” She specified that she could engage in sex work while having a boyfriend, but not while having a husband. At the time of the interview, Chloe said that she had an intimate partner who did not prevent her from engaging in sex work. She said, “right now, I'm in a relationship.” Chloe distinguished between the intimate relationships she has while engaging in sex work and a “healthy relationship and true love and marriage.” Chloe explained that if she were married and transacted with consumers, “that would be cheating.”

Seven participants did not identify the specific circumstances that would prompt an exit after ceasing to advertise. Because returning to transacting with consumers would be easy for Helen (23 years old, white, 1 year of experience), she would remain open to the idea of it. She said, “It's kind of one of those jobs that you can come back to even if you decided to leave.” Angie (26 years old, white, 4 years of experience) also reasoned that returning to sex work would be easy because sex work is unlike occupations that subject employees to termination. She said, “It's not like it's gone forever. If I really wanna do it, I can. If I don't, I won't...It's not like, ‘Hey, I'm a lawyer, and I got fired, and I can never get that back’.” Because leaving sex work would be different than being

terminated, Angie intended to return to sex work before permanently ceasing to transact with consumers. Helen and Angie illustrate a more general feature of contingent labor. Whereas some people delay retiring from a job to avoid losing healthcare and vested benefits, Helen and Angie could drift in and out of sex work without sacrificing health coverage, paid vacation days, employer contributions to savings accounts, stock options, or the like, since these benefits are not formally provided by sex work.

Eva (22 years old, black, 1 year of experience) expected to continue transacting with consumers after she stopped advertising. She explained, “I view retirement as after you got a really nice car, you have a stable home...you can retire and not be on any type of site, and still text your regulars...not like, ‘I’m so over this. Going into retirement’ ...That’s called quitting.” Eva defined retirement as the cessation of advertising (i.e., “not be on any type of site” that hosts advertisements for sex work services) due to acquiring financial comfort, as opposed to “quitting” without saving money. However, Eva did not foresee any event that would compel her to stop transacting with “regulars.” Eva asked, “Why would I ever give them up?” Likewise, neither Barbie (21 years old, white, 8 years of experience) nor Rachel (27 years old, white, 8 years of experience) saw a reason to stop transacting with regular clients when they stopped posting advertisements for sex work. Rachel said, “If somebody wants to give me some money after I’m thirty-five, I’m not gonna turn it down.”

Desirability of exit. The third column of Table 2 shows the distribution of the sample by their assessment of the desirability of exit. Participants fell into one of three

categories: exit as desirable, exit as undesirable, and exit as neither desirable nor undesirable.

Fourteen participants perceived exit to be desirable – that is, something they wanted. Among these participants, ten were enthusiastic about exiting. For example, Sofia said that exit would feel “amazing.” Elle, Dana, and Lucy said that exit would feel “good.” Elle elaborated that, “I just can't wait for (exit).” Courtney, Jamie, Doris, Natalie, and Molly said that exiting would feel “good” because it would mean that they had achieved their financial goals. Natalie equated exit with fulfilling “a dream that I'm chasing.” The four remaining participants who perceived exit to be desirable expressed reservations regarding exit. Wendy said that exit would enable her to “focus on my real life, not just my (hidden) life,” and spend more time with friends and family. However, Wendy felt “sad” about exiting because she would miss the abundant income. Likewise, Susie (36 years old, white, 5 years of experience) reasoned that exit would generate negative emotions because she would miss the money, but it would also generate positive emotions because she could stop hiding her work from everybody. Vicky said “retirement now to me, it kind of just makes me feel like I gotta get on the ball” to prepare for it. Chloe said that she felt “good” about exit and “anxious” because “it's a whole life change,” and “fear of what it's gonna be like.”

Susie and Doris said that exit was desirable because they could never tell their very traditional parents about sex work and the burden of hiding it from them had increased. Susie said that she had “closed up” and avoided her parents. Doris said that, “my family is ultimately number one in my life...I feel guilty, and I cry myself to sleep

some nights.” Chloe said that exit was desirable because her daughter entered college and, “now it’s time for me because...I don’t need to be home. Now, I can go to school.” Susie and Chloe also both wanted to get married. Dana explained that exit was desirable because “if I continue doing this, I’m never gonna stop. I’ll just be comfortable with what I’m doing”, and then later have regrets such as, “I’ll never get a real job.” Furthermore, although Dana did not hide her work from her intimate partner, Dana said that exit was desirable because she wanted to improve her relationship with her intimate partner.

Eight participants perceived exit to be undesirable – that is, something they did not want. For example, Nelly (22 years old, Middle-Eastern, 4 years of experience) said that exiting made her feel “scared.” Nina said that, “thinking about (exit) makes me nervous” because she did not want to exit. Polly recognized that, “everything’s perishable” and “it’s got a shelf life,” referring to the likelihood that consumer demand for her services would decline as she aged. Polly said that her inevitable exit would sadden her because “I look forward to going to work.” Similarly, Kelly reasoned that, “the older you get, the harder it gets...guys want the young, perky, pretty girl.” Kelly said that exiting would “devastate me emotionally”, and exclaimed, “Do I wanna retire at thirty-five? Hell no! If I could keep it going like it is when I’m young, I would still do it.” Polly and Kelly were, thus, adamantly opposed to exiting.

Five participants perceived exit to be neither desirable nor undesirable. They felt indifferent about exit. Tristen (26 years old, white, 4 years of experience) said that the thought of leaving the sex work industry felt neither good nor bad because “I’ve already done it before and not had any issue. Like, I got a job that fast...I’ve been able to adapt to

anything and been good at everything that I've done, ever in life." Tristen's previous departure from sex work gave her confidence and reduced her dependency on sex work, which made her unconcerned about her future in sex work. Helen also explained that, "I wasn't here because I had nothing else. I was here because I knew this was gonna help me." She expected to exit on her own terms because she was not desperate. Thus, regarding exit, Helen said that, "I'm not really like too worried about it either way." Angie said that she did not "really feel any type of way about" exit, and that, "I'm happy in whatever I choose to do because if I choose to do something, then obviously I want to." Angie, Barbie and Crystal expected to exit on their own terms because they were still young. Angie said, "I'm young. I can do what I want now. Plenty of fucking time." Barbie said that, "I'm young, I'm twenty-one. I still got a little while." Crystal said that, "I'm still gonna be hot when I hit thirty."

Current Intentions to Exit

The sample divided into two categories of exit intentions (see Table 2, 4th column): women who intended to exit sex work (i.e., exiters) and women who did not intend to exit. The distinction between the two groups is that exiters expressed having an imminent and/or definite timeframe for exiting and the others did not.

Intending to exit. Among the sixteen women intending to exit, there was variation in their timeframe for exit. Twelve participants intended to exit in less than two years (i.e., near-term exiters) and four participants intended to exit in three to five years (i.e., long-term exiters). The three participants who had the most imminent and definite timeframes for exit gave similar reasons for exiting. For example, Doris said, "I plan on

doing this for maybe another month and a half, maybe two months...and then go into another profession.” Doris described sex work as a lucrative phase in her life that would end when she entered a new “profession”, and linked her exit intentions to the guilt she felt for deceiving her parents. Nelly said that she intended to exit within six months because she reached a crossroads that forced her to choose between sex work and other interests, such as pursuing a traditional career. Sofia intended to exit in a few days. Like Doris and Nelly, Sofia felt guilty and wanted to reconnect with her parents and make them proud of her career achievements outside of sex work. The guilt that intensified Sofia’s intention to exit was fueled by her upbringing and her recent discovery of religion.

All of the near-term exiters listed among their reasons for exiting that sex work interfered with other priorities and relationships outside of sex work. Dana’s satisfaction with sex work had declined because sex work interfered with other priorities. Dana said that she, therefore, intended to exit within one year because “I want to go to school. I want to better my relationship with my boyfriend...and then, I guess, get a career going.” Dana also hoped that her relationship with family members would improve after she exited. She was working on saving money so that, “when I stop, then I can have money to fall back on.” Elle also said that she intended to exit within a year or two, after saving money and paying off debts, so that she could improve her relationship with her romantic partner. She said that although she wanted to exit immediately, continuing to work for one year would mean that, “by the time I’m ready to have a family, and I’m ready to start

an actual adult life, I'll be done with all of the debt." Thus, her new "adult" life would begin when she exited from sex work, entered a new occupation, and started a family.

The four long-term exiters intended to exit in three to five years. For example, Vicky said, "I give myself a solid five years. I feel like by (age) thirty, I should have businesses open, and I should be able to move on." Lucy intended to exit in three years when she finished training for a healthcare job in a hospital. She said that, "I'm gonna retire in three years, once I have my certificates." Chloe intended to exit in four years, "when (her daughter) graduates college...because my whole reason for getting in this industry was to provide her a great life." Chloe added that sex work "was a means to an end." Thus, she will no longer need the relatively high income that sex work generates when her daughter becomes financially independent. In other words, Chloe will exit when sex work has served its purpose.

Not intending to exit. Eleven participants had no intentions to exit sex work. Women in this category believed that they would eventually exit, but they did not have an imminent or definite timeframe for exit. For example, Barbie said, "I don't think about it too much, but I know one day, I will retire." She clarified that her exit would not occur within five years and probably not within ten years. Barbie explained that, "being sexual is part of my personality. It's fun to me. So maybe as long as I could be sexual. I might not do it like every day when I'm older, but I think for a pretty long time." In other words, because sex work was a good fit for her personality, Barbie would continue to be a sex worker until physical maturation forced her to slow down. Natalie's intentions to exit were undeveloped because she did not know how long it would take her to

accomplish her financial objectives as a sex worker. She said that, “It could be five years. It could be ten years.” Molly’s intentions were the least developed of all the non-exiters. She said, “it’s all gonna happen at the right time...everything’s gonna play out right.” This outlook resembled Barbie’s belief that, “everything’s gonna come when it needs to come.”

Some non-exiters intended to engage in sex work until their marketability declined due to age. For example, Kelly (25 years old) said, “Retire? No...I don’t think I’d ever turn down (money). But there is a retirement age...you can’t do it forever.” In other words, Kelly did not intend to exit until she reached an age that placed her at a competitive disadvantage due to consumer preferences for younger sex workers. Kelly elaborated, “I’d like to be done by the time I’m thirty-five” because “I just don’t wanna be doing it at forty. It just seems too stressful” with the heightened competition that accompanies aging. Kelly added, “You’re going against twenty-five, eighteen-year old girls.” Nina said that she had no intentions to exit because “I’m super young, still. So, I got to do all that I can, now, because there’s an expiration date.” Like Kelly, Nina expected consumer demand for her labor to decline beyond a certain age (i.e., the “expiration date”) and she wanted to capitalize on her youth until then. Like Kelly and Rachel, Nina said “if you want to put money in my account, I’m not gonna say no.” At the same time, Nina also explained that she was too old to exit. She said, “I’m twenty-four now. It’d be weird if I move back” with her parents and attended college. She said that getting arrested, “made me want to quit...but it’s too late. You already got caught. You have a record that says prostitution.”

Intentions to exit by exit meaning. Intentions to exit were unrelated to the meaning of exit. Among the participants who viewed exit from sex work as ceasing to advertise, six intended to exit and three did not intend to exit. Among the participants who viewed exit from sex work as coinciding with circumstances that would arise sometime after ceasing to advertise, ten intended to exit and eight did not intend to exit.

Intentions to exit by desirability of exit. Intentions to exit were not clearly related to the desirability of exit. Among participants who perceived exit to be desirable, eleven intended to exit and three did not. Natalie, Molly, and Jamie perceived exit to be desirable but had no intentions to exit. They wanted to achieve vague, ambitious objectives before exiting. Natalie would exit when “my dream is complete,” Molly when she had “gotten to the top,” and Jamie when she had “saved up to invest in what I want to do.” Among participants who perceived exit to be undesirable, four intended to exit and four did not. Chanel, Abigail, Nelly, and Polly perceived exit to be undesirable because they enjoyed sex work, but they intended to exit because sex work interfered with their goals and/or relationships. To some extent, they felt forced to exit due to their age. Polly would soon reach the age of “retirement” within the industry, created by consumer preferences for younger sex workers, and the other three described urges to participate in institutions (i.e., advanced education or marriage) that were normative for their age group (i.e., people in their mid-twenties). Among participants who perceived exit to be neither desirable nor undesirable, one intended to exit and four did not.

Perceived Feasibility of Exit

Twelve participants perceived exit to be infeasible for them, and fifteen participants perceived exit to be feasible (see Table 2, 5th column). Their narratives revealed two factors that relate to perceived feasibility: perceived challenges to exit and retention factors. Challenges to exit included things that increased the difficulty of exiting from sex work. Retention factors included things that increased the motivation to stay in sex work.

Exit as infeasible. Twelve participants perceived exit to be infeasible (i.e., difficult). Of these, two participants (Rachel and Heidi) perceived exit to be slightly infeasible due to the presence of one challenge which they viewed as minor (e.g., the need to save money or pay off debts). Five participants (Susie, Chloe, Nina, Barbie, and Eva) perceived exit to be moderately infeasible due to one major challenge or retention factor, such as a spending habit that makes them dependent on the relatively easy and high income that sex work provides. Five participants (Dana, Chanel, Crystal, Nelly, Polly) perceived exit to be highly infeasible due to the existence of several challenges and retention factors.

Exit as feasible. Fifteen participants perceived exit to be feasible (i.e., easy). Of these, seven participants (Doris, Natalie, Molly, Abigail, Wendy, Vicky, Helen) perceived exit to be moderately feasible despite the presence of challenges. Eight participants (Angie, Tristen, Elle, Lucy, Jamie, Kelly, Sofia, Courtney) perceived exit to be highly feasible due to the absence of challenges and retention factors.

Among the participants who perceived exit to be highly feasible, their narratives revealed evidence suggesting that some of the women may be misperceiving challenges to exit. For example, Angie saw no obstacles to exit, but her self-described resistance to planning could impede her exit. She wanted to open a business but had not developed a plan to achieve that objective. Furthermore, Angie insisted that, “If I do anything besides what I’m doing, then I’m gonna go bigger...I make more money than a 9 to 5...I would never go down to less money. I would never go to a 9 to 5.” Angie’s reluctance to pursue an alternative source of income, whether through preparing to enter another career or open a business, may be an obstacle to exit from sex work. Tristen said that, “I can stop right now. I have a degree. I could go get a job like that.” However, Tristen noted that she had “retired” once before, “got a regular job,” and later returned to sex work because she “missed the traveling” and “the fun aspect of it.”

Feasibility of exit by meaning of exit. Feasibility of exit was related to the meaning of exit. Among the nine participants who viewed exit as ceasing to advertise, all but one perceived exit to be feasible. Among the eighteen participants who viewed exit as ceasing services, seven perceived exit to be feasible, and eleven perceived it to be infeasible. Thus, participants who viewed exit as ceasing services more frequently perceived exit to be infeasible than did participants who viewed exit as ceasing to advertise.

Feasibility of exit by desirability of exit. Feasibility of exit was related to the desirability of exit. Among the fourteen participants who perceived exit to be desirable, all but four perceived exit to be feasible. Among the eight participants who perceived exit

to be undesirable, all but two perceived exit to be infeasible. Among the five participants who perceived exit to be neither desirable nor undesirable, three perceived exit to be feasible, and two perceived it to be infeasible. These patterns suggest that as the feasibility of exit increased, so too did its desirability.

Intentions to exit by feasibility of exit. Perceptions of exit feasibility were not clearly related to exit intentions. Among the fifteen participants who viewed exit as feasible, six nonetheless had no intentions to exit. As described above, Natalie, Molly, and Jamie wanted to achieve vague, ambitious objectives before exiting, but they perceived exit to be feasible. Kelly, Angie, and Helen perceived exit to be feasible but had no intentions to exit because they did not perceive exit to be desirable and, thus, were not motivated to exit. Among the twelve participants who viewed exit as infeasible, seven nonetheless intended to exit. These women discussed things they were looking forward to after exit (e.g., school, alternative work, marriage). Thus, for them, although it would be hard to break out of the comfortable and lucrative routine of sex work, doing so would bring about circumstances that the women highly valued. Note that assessing exit feasibility appeared to be more difficult for participants who had no intentions to exit than for participants who had intentions to exit. For women in the latter category, exit was real whereas for women in the former category, it was hypothetical at the time of interview. This difference in the salience of exit due to its immediacy may explain the lack of relationship between perceptions of feasibility and intentions to exit in the sample.

Challenges associated with exiting. Participants identified several challenges associated with exiting, including inadequate financial resources, insufficient employment alternatives, and lack of a plan.

Ten participants identified financial challenges associated with exiting, including the need for money to cover emergencies and the lack of money after exiting sex work. For example, Rachel cited the need for money to deal with “unexpected shit,” such as car repair fees and financial penalties for law violations, as a challenge to exit. She regularly broke a number of laws, such as by driving without a license. She explained that financial losses stemming from her criminal convictions would always need to be recouped through sex work before she could exit. The concern here was that savings might be depleted by unexpected expenses (e.g., “some major health issue” or “a financial blunder”). Participants who wanted to save money before exiting from sex work would not be able to exit if unanticipated expenses temporarily interfered with this objective.

Four participants identified insufficient employment alternatives as a challenge associated with exiting. Three of them were concerned that another job would be financially unsatisfactory (i.e., pay too little relative to sex work). For example, Polly said, “My skills are just entry-level.” The fourth person in this group explained that she could not exit because she could not get another job. Barbie said, “I’ve been prostituting since I was thirteen. This is all I know how to do pretty much.”

Three participants stated that the absence of a plan for either how to exit or what to do after sex work was a challenge associated with exiting. Polly, for example, explained that exit would be difficult due to “the whole goal problem that I have. I can't

set goals ‘cause I can't think long-term.” Nina said that exit was infeasible because “I don’t have a retirement plan,” and “I don't like to make plans at all.” In addition to having no plan for what to do after exiting from sex work, Nina perceived that her difficulty with developing an investment strategy would be a challenge to exit. She said that she regretted squandering her income on apparel and beauty products because “When you get a little bit older, you start thinking...I should have saved all that money. I could be in a house right now.”

Just as some participants described the inability to save money and/or plan as an exit challenge, the ability to save money and plan for the future was described as facilitating exit for nine other participants. Helen was saving money and planning for the future. She explained that, “I try to put like a logical reason for each of my monetary goals I make in a day...This'll go toward like a house payment, or this'll go toward this bill.” She created daily earnings goals, and connected them to long-term financial goals. Thus, Helen perceived exit to be feasible because she was committed to financial goals and planning. Doris was saving money and she connected her goal-orientation to exit. Doris said that, “I think that once I do reach this (savings) goal that I had in mind, once I reach that, it's done (i.e., she would exit).” Vicky explained that she had become more dedicated to saving money, and that, “I feel like it’s more important now than ever, especially ‘cause I want to do other things.” In other words, Vicky was saving money so that she could open a business and exit sex work. Wendy also had no problem saving money and was focused on her goal of using her sex work earnings to open a business.

Kelly was saving money for exit and said that, “I have goals set in my head and I wanna do it. I’m very goal-oriented.”

Courtney said, “Every night, I put one-hundred dollars in three piggy banks.” She explained that, “One box is for savings, one box is for bills, and one box is to spend. So at the end of the month, you have nine racks (i.e., \$9,000).” She intended to follow this plan for approximately five years because “that’s a lot of money in five years...I have a goal, and I’m just doing it.” Thus, Courtney had concrete financial goals that she connected to exit and no problem saving money. Sofia had achieved her goal of saving money for school, and thus perceived no obstacles to exiting. Sofia stated, “I can move on, and just never remember this business again.” She explained that, “I didn’t get involved in the designer stuff,” and “I kept one focus, which was school, and I’m ending with that focus.” In other words, Sofia knew that other sex workers had difficulty exiting because sex work fueled their conspicuous consumption, but she could exit because she focused on allocating most of her earnings to paying for an education that would give her an alternative career.

All participants mentioned whether they could obtain alternative employment. Thirteen participants said that they could find or currently had jobs outside of sex work, and fourteen participants said that they could not find alternative employment. Women in the former group were more likely to perceive exit to be feasible and to view exit as involving no challenges. Similarly, women who were preparing to either enter a new career or open a business were more likely to perceive exit to be feasible than women who made no such preparations.

Retention factors. Twelve participants identified factors that compel them to stay in sex work, including the satisfaction they derive from interacting with consumers and the ample and “easy” income they earn. For example, Polly enjoyed “the validation” she got from consumers. “Who doesn't like someone giving you compliments? It boosts you.” Exiting, Polly said, “would almost be like I wouldn't be pretty anymore.” Helen enjoyed nurturing consumers and felt that it would be difficult to stop transacting with them.

Some participants said that it would be difficult to give up the ample and “easy” income they earn from sex work. In some of these cases, the concern was that if they exited sex work, they could not afford the luxurious lifestyle they currently enjoy or change their spending habits. Wendy described sex work as “addicting” because “the money comes so fast.” She said that, “I can go to the mall right now, spend \$500, come back, and make \$600.” She called this a “luxury.” Similarly, Polly said that, “I'm spending what I make because I have a fucking problem with shopping, basically.” She elaborated that, “the hardest thing” is knowing that through sex work, “I can make that money back.”

For some women, the high value placed on a luxurious lifestyle is associated with their prior experience with poverty. Barbie, who in childhood “never had nothing” said, “I got in the habit of spending stuff and not managing (money).” She recognized that, “to be able to retire, to become successfully retired,” she would need to start “budgeting and managing.” However, Barbie explained, “Right now, I'm young, and I want the hair, the nails, the expensive clothes, the shoes.” Chloe said, “I've become accustomed to a

lifestyle...it's just such easy money." Chloe likened exiting from sex work to a return to her impoverished past.

Other women reported that if they exited, they could give up the lifestyle, but they would miss the ability to earn or obtain "easy" money through sex work. For example, Crystal said that, "You've got guys just throwing money at you. It's really addicting." She also said, "I tried to quit" several years ago, but "I lasted four months, and then I was like, I don't wanna work at the Disney store in the mall." Crystal said she liked being able to get consumers to give her substantial sums of money. She described cases in which she got consumers to wire her \$3,000 "just for the fuck of it" – that is, without expecting immediate reciprocation in the form of sexual services. Similarly, Eva did not express that, if she exited, she would have spending problems or miss the luxury. Rather, she would miss the thrill of texting her consumers to get them to give her money.

Two participants said that the ample income may have at one time operated to retain them in the industry, but it did so no longer. For example, Lucy said that, "I got addicted to the money," but exit became feasible when the "addiction" faded. Doris said that, "it's like an addiction," but she thought that she would be able to exit because her "addiction" had diminished.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter described participants' perceptions of exit from sex work. The narratives identify exit to involve issues associated with the nature of exit (swift versus gradual) and the desirability and feasibility of exit.

CHAPTER V. Descriptive Results on Social Learning and Identity

This chapter describes the distribution of the sample by characteristics relevant to Social Learning Theory (differential association, definitions of sex work, and differential reinforcement) and by characteristics relevant to Identity Theory (sex worker identity commitment and sex worker identity prominence).

Differential Association – Intensity of Ties

Twenty participants had weak ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people. Five participants had moderate ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people. Two participants had strong ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people.

Weak ties. As explained in Chapter 3, participants in this category either had weak ties with consumers and sex workers, or they had moderate to strong ties with consumers and sex workers that were matched by ties of equal or greater intensity with other people. Participants with weak ties to consumers adamantly avoided giving “free time” to consumers and did not describe having friendships with consumers. Participants with weak ties to sex workers were not close with any sex workers. They viewed sex workers as competition, had been betrayed by sex workers in the past, and/or felt like they had nothing in common with other sex workers.

Elle (25 years old, white, 5 years of experience) and Sofia (22 years old, white, 1 year of experience) had weak ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people. They emphasized the business nature of the relationship with consumers. When consumers tried getting too friendly, Elle told them, “You're paying me to do this.” Sofia

described her relationships with consumers as “Strictly business. I have had clients that want something personal, and that’s when I just drop them.” Elle said that other sex workers, whom she referred to as “associates,” are “mean and weird” and “most of them don't even have their heads screwed on right.” She does not “like to socialize with them because I've had such bad experiences in the past.” The previous relationships she had with sex workers “all ended badly.” Regarding other sex workers, Sofia also said that, “I was actually very close with them until they really, I guess, deceived me.” She now felt that, “You can’t really trust any girl in this business”, especially “girls that have been stuck in this business for so long that their mind is just corrupted.”

Angie (26 years old, white, 4 years of experience) also had weak ties, but she had weak ties to everybody, whether or not they were in the industry. She described her relationships with consumers as “business” and did not talk to consumers outside of appointments. She had no relationships with other sex workers. When asked about her relationships with family members, Angie said that she did not communicate with them much “because I work a lot.” Angie explained that she could not have a romantic relationship while being a sex worker, but also, did not want one. She said, “It’s more safe to not have a relationship when you’re in the business because most people are not gonna understand...guy’s gonna get jealous. It’s the same thing with everybody else’s relationship. You got people in normal relationships, and they have a hundred freaking problems.” When asked if she ever felt lonely, Angie said, “You’re young. You have your whole life. Why the fuck do you wanna spend it tied down all the time?” She did not envision ever getting married and said, “You’re supposed to love your fucking self.

You was born in this world by yourself.” Because she never knew her birth parents, Angie created social distance between herself and others which facilitated her involvement in sex work.

Similarly, Nina (24 years old, white, 4 years of experience) had weak ties to everybody, whether or not they were in the industry. She described her relationships with consumers as “business.” Regarding consumers, she said that, “I just don't want them to know anything personal about me” and “if they're gonna be invading my entire body, I want to have like this little piece of myself private.” Nina had no female friends and described her relationships with former friends as “like a fake relationship” or “a Facebook friendship.” She did not live in the same city as her parents and did not see them often. Nina said, “They think I work in a night club or something;” she did not want to tell them about her involvement in sex work. Nina felt that she could not have a romantic relationship while being a sex worker. When she tried having a relationship in the past, “it’s never lasted because most guys, they don’t mind the dancing part (i.e., topless dancing at clubs), they just don't really like this part (i.e., commercial sexual intercourse).” However, Nina said that she did not want a romantic relationship now because “I don't want someone to want to change me.” Thus, Nina concluded that, “I don’t really have as much of a personal life as probably other people do because I just spend most of the time by myself, or with my dogs.” As with Angie, this distance between herself and everybody else facilitated Nina’s involvement in sex work.

Tristen (26 years old, white, 4 years of experience) had moderate ties to consumers and sex workers but strong ties to other people. She kept consumers at arms-

length by telling them, “I need help with bills. So you want to help me, or you don't” and “I'm not your girlfriend.” She explained that, “You have to know when it's getting to that point and cut them off” when they get “too personal.” She said that “I really like” one sex worker “and I have one other friend.” However, “I don't too much associate with girls in this field because they don't know how to differentiate business and pleasure.” Tristen enjoyed family interactions, such as “making tamales with my Grandma” and “going to a barbecue.” She reasoned that, “If I had to choose my family or choose work, I'd choose my family because I can always do something else. But my family knows what I do, and they're understanding.” Tristen had such an open relationship with her mother that she said, “Sometimes, I'm so stressed out because I haven't made money and bills are due that I just want to cry. I call my mom, and I cry. Then she'll be like, ‘Do you feel better?’ I'll be like, ‘Yeah.’ And she'll be like, ‘Okay, go in there, and go re-post your ad’.” Furthermore, Tristen had a romantic partner but said, “We just have an understanding: don't ask questions.”

Moderate ties. Participants in this category had moderate or strong ties with consumers and sex workers but not strong ties with other people. Participants who had moderate ties with sex workers were perhaps close with several sex workers but distrusted most other women in the industry. Participants who had strong ties with sex workers described their relationships with them as being like family and felt they had much in common with at least some other sex workers. Participants with strong ties to consumers would to some extent communicate with consumers outside of appointments. Although all participants engaged in many transactions with consumers that were strictly

business, the key difference between participants with weak ties and participants with strong ties is that the latter described having friendships with at least some consumers, and the former did not. Most participants who had strong ties to consumers said that they came to care about some consumers over time and generally liked consumers. That said, among participants with strong ties to consumers, the relationship with consumers is not easily labeled. Courtney said, “It's just like friendships...but, it's still business.” Similarly, Jamie said, “professional and personal.”

Barbie (21 years old, white, 8 years of experience) exemplifies participants in this category. She said that most consumers are “pretty cool” and that she “would wanna build relationships” with them. She said that, “You do become friends with them. You get to know their life, and they know a little bit about your life.” Barbie’s frame of reference was shaped by her past experiences as an outdoor sex worker. She explained, “On the track (i.e., the street), it’s more like you’re fighting to get that date. Like everyone wants that one car that pulls up.” She felt that online sex workers “are the most acceptive of you as a person and your lifestyle, compared to other people.” She elaborated that, “No one’s judgmental. So it’s kind of like a cool, little family thing. My roommates, they’re all working girls, and we don’t look at each other as working girls. We just look at each other as normal girls. We love each other.” Barbie was uninterested in a romantic relationship, but it was important to her that she had friends outside of the sex work industry, and she was in regular contact with her mother.

Strong ties. Participants in this category had strong ties with consumers and sex workers and weak ties with other people. Rachel (27 years old, white, 8 years of

experience) exemplifies participants who had strong ties. About consumers, she said, “They’re paying us (i.e., sex workers) so they don’t have to deal with drama (i.e., problems that arise in non-commercial relationships); so we’ll leave when we’re done.” She added, “They know that we’re just there for the money and a good time.” About other sex workers, Rachel said, “we’re close...over the years, I’ve known a lot of different girls.” She added that, “We’re always trying to help each other.” Rachel’s two roommates were sex workers, and they often had guests visit their home who were sex workers. Rachel said, “This is a house that gets full of hos.” Rachel only occasionally visited her daughter and other family members, who lived in Texas, and had no friends outside of the sex work industry. She explained that, “I only like people that wanna get like me”, and female non-sex-workers are “a different breed” whom she avoids. When asked if she ever wanted to fall in love or have a non-commercial relationship with a male, Rachel said that, “I love myself. I love my friends (i.e., sex workers).”

Differential Association – Exposure

Seven participants had low, twelve participants had moderate, and eight participants had high exposure to participants in the sex work industry, as indicated by the amount of time spent communicating with sex workers and consumers, and reading blogs written by sex workers and consumers.

Low exposure. Chanel exemplifies participants who had low exposure to participants in the sex work industry. She spent “not that much” time interacting with consumers and “probably not any time at all outside of a reference check” interacting with sex workers. She “used to spend a little bit of time in between appointments, during

in-calls, blogging”, but she stopped reading blogs because she stopped working in hotels (i.e., at “in-calls”).

Moderate exposure. Eva (22 years old, black, 1 year of experience) exemplifies participants who had moderate exposure to participants in the sex work industry. She said that communicating with consumers was “a twenty-four hour job” and explained that, “I’m putting in daily work of texting them like, ‘Oh yeah, I’m totally thinking about you’.” For emphasis, she added that this occurred “Every day. All the fucking time.” Regarding her interaction with sex workers, however, Eva said “I don’t talk to them bitches. I mean, I talk to a few bitches, like a few ones that I have met...I don’t talk to many of them because most of them have pimps.” Finally, she had moderate exposure to blogs written by consumers and sex workers. Eva said “sometimes I blog”, but she read blogs more often than she participated in them because she had once become ensnared in an online controversy in which members of the website became offended when she posted blogs soliciting one specific type of consumer and discouraging another type of consumer from contacting her.

High exposure. Natalie (20 years old, Asian, 2 years of experience) exemplifies participants who had high exposure to participants in the sex work industry. She said that she worked “thirty-five to forty hours, or more” each week, and that “almost all of that time” was spent interacting with consumers, either face-to-face or otherwise. She remained in constant contact with her best friend, who was also a sex worker. Furthermore, she sometimes would “meet a girl ‘cause we were staying at the same place. And so we’ll actually hang out”, and that would amount to “a couple hours a day.”

Regarding blogs written by consumers and sex workers, Natalie said, “I actually read them a lot. I just don't say much, but I'm reading them to see people and see how they are.”

Polly (38 years old, white, 3 years of experience) also exemplifies participants who had high exposure to participants in the sex work industry. Regarding the time she spent with sex workers, Polly said that, “If we're in the same location, we'll talk all day long.” Moreover, she frequently interacted with several close friends who were sex workers. Polly spent many hours blogging with consumers and sex workers. She said that, “I have 18,000 comments. And I've only started blogging like a year ago...I'm on there every fucking day...every hour on that shit...I definitely increased my blogging. I even opened up a club” (online).

Definitions of Sex Work

Participants were placed into four categories based on a combination of whether they perceived sex work to be immoral and how they described sex work. Six participants had very unfavorable definitions of sex work, five participants had unfavorable definitions of sex work, four participants had favorable definitions of sex work, and twelve participants had very favorable definitions of sex work. The participants who had very favorable definitions listed being sociable, being a friend, pleasing people, networking, and/or counseling among their job duties, and they did not perceive sex work to be immoral. The participants who had favorable definitions did not include any of these duties in their job descriptions, but they did not perceive sex work to be immoral. The participants who had unfavorable definitions also listed being sociable, being a

friend, pleasing people, networking, and/or counseling among their job duties, but they felt guilty about engaging in sex work and perceived it to be wrong or immoral. The participants who had very unfavorable definitions did not include any of these duties in their job descriptions and perceived sex work to be wrong or immoral.

Very unfavorable definitions. Chanel exemplifies participants who had very unfavorable definitions of sex work. She did not define sex work as socializing, networking, or counseling. Rather, Chanel described sex work as consisting of, “posting ads, checking my messages, responding to messages, constantly being on my phone, have to be managing appointments as well as scheduling other appointments while I’m working throughout the day.” She defined sex work as immoral and said that, therefore, “I don’t hang out with my mom. I just don’t talk to anybody because I don’t have much to say about what I’m doing. I just stay distant from friends that I had before because there’s only so much I can say.” Chanel explained that, “I used to never think I would do this...I feel bad about it...It is bad.”

Unfavorable definitions. Nina (24 years old, white, 4 years of experience) exemplifies participants who had unfavorable definitions of sex work. For her, sex work consists of “being company, making people feel good”, and providing “fantasy.” She feels that “it’s like any other customer service-based job.” However, Nina defined sex work as immoral and said that, “I just feel bad about it once in a while.” She said that it bothers her when people use the word “hookers” because it makes her “think bad about it.” Nina explained that it is particularly wrong to have sex with married consumers. She feels guilty when doing so and thinks, “What if that was me, and that was my guy?”

Favorable definitions. Kelly exemplifies participants who had favorable definitions of sex work. She did not define sex work as socializing, networking, or counseling. Rather, Kelly described sex work as consisting of screening and marketing. She said that sex work entails “answering phones, answering private messages, posting ads...I’m constantly taking pictures. Just that consumes a whole entire day...it’s weeding through people...it consumes a lot because if you don’t do it, then it’s not gonna happen.” She did not define sex work as immoral. Kelly said that, “I don’t think about it as immoral or degrading at all. I’m here providing a service that guys want and like. And it’s between two consensual people. That’s the main thing. We’re both wanting to do it. So it’s kinda like, ‘Why? How would it be immoral?’ I guess some of them are married, but at the same time, their home lives are miserable.”

Very favorable definitions. Eva exemplifies participants who had very favorable definitions of sex work. She explained that, “I have more layers to me than just (sex). So I get paid for lengthy stays which are more money. I get paid to go out to dinner or have conversations.” A large portion of the work involved socializing. She would tell consumers that, “this is how this hour is about to go down: for the first fifteen, twenty minutes, we’re going to talk, and we’re gonna drink some of this wine.” Eva defined her work as an important form of care work and described it as “therapy” for consumers. She boasted that “a lot of people have said that I’m open, I’m non-judgmental.” Her approach was that, “we don’t need to talk about, or pinpoint what’s wrong with you, or what’s not wrong with you, ‘cause there’s a lot of shit that’s wrong with me.”

Differential Reinforcement

Three types of differential reinforcement are described in this section. First, participants varied in whether they described a net benefit of sex work. Second, participants varied in whether they described differential emotional reinforcement. Third, participants varied in whether they described costs associated with performing emotional labor.

Differential reinforcement – benefits versus costs. With regard to the first type, thirteen participants described the benefits derived from sex work as exceeding the costs of engaging in sex work (i.e., benefitters). Fourteen participants described the costs of engaging in sex work as exceeding the benefits derived from sex work (i.e., non-benefitters). The average participant cited three benefits and three to four costs, with little difference between benefitters and non-benefitters in the quantity of benefits and costs listed. There were several costs that were commonly cited by participants in both categories. Seventeen participants disliked dealing with consumers who haggle or are rude. Nine participants disliked running the risk of contracting a sexually transmitted disease, getting arrested, or getting hurt by a consumer. Likewise, nineteen participants listed satisfactory income as a benefit of sex work.

Benefitters are distinguished from non-benefitters primarily by the quality of benefits and costs they experienced. In particular, eleven non-benefitters disliked the stigma of sex work, hiding sex work, the unpredictable revenue, and/or that sex work impedes having a romantic relationship. Only one benefitter named any of these costs, and in her case, the benefits far outweighed the unpredictable revenue that she disliked.

Although the other three non-benefitters did not mention these costs, the only benefit they discussed was income. Eight non-benefitters and two benefitters disliked screening consumers and communicating with them prior to booking appointments. Four non-benefitters and two benefitters disliked being intimate with consumers, especially ones with poor hygiene. Ten non-benefitters and six benefitters liked the autonomy, convenience, flexibility, freedom, and/or independence that sex work offers, and/or learning from/about people through sex work. Seven other benefitters liked “the experience” of being a “ho”, being sexual, the money, compliments from consumers, and/or travelling. The benefitters rated their job satisfaction on a scale of one to ten (with ten being “extremely happy”) as eight or above. Among the non-benefitters, five rated their job satisfaction as eight, and nine rated their job satisfaction as less than eight.

Benefits exceed the costs of sex work. Helen (23 years old, white, 1 year of experience) exemplifies the net benefitters. She described her job satisfaction by saying that, “My overall happiness is pretty great. I mean I’d say it’s an eight” on a scale of one to ten. She said that she “loved” her job, and “if you find what you would gladly do for free, figure out a way to get paid for it, then you’re a genius.” Sex work compared favorably to her other work experiences, particularly at Disneyland, which she called “the worst job I’ve ever had.” Referring to sex work, Helen said “This is the best job I’ve ever had.” What she liked most about sex work was that consumers treated her better than she was “treated in the real world” by men. She felt that due to her interactions with consumers, “I’m a lot more mentally sound now than I was before” becoming a sex worker. She said that, “I understand the social stigma that comes with this job.” She

called the stigma “a bummer,” but reported that it was not costly to her. The only costs of sex work that Helen listed were consumers with poor hygiene (e.g., “guys who don't shower” before meeting her) and the occasional rude consumer. She described these costs as manageable.

Costs exceed the benefits of sex work. Susie (36 years old, white, 5 years of experience) exemplifies participants who described the costs of sex work as exceeding its benefits. She rated her job satisfaction as a six on a scale of one to ten. Like most other non-benefiters, the benefits of sex work that Susie listed were convenience, flexibility, and learning about people. Susie explained that she was dissatisfied with sex work because she wanted to have a successful career, and sex work did not offer such opportunities. Like most other non-benefiters, she was upset by the stigma associated with sex work, did not like hiding sex work from family, and felt bad about lying to family about her work. Lastly, she was stressed about maintaining her safety and did not like marketing to and answering messages from consumers.

Differential reinforcement - Differential emotional reinforcement. Drawing on Identity Theory, which argues that positive affect reinforces behavior and negative affect prompts people to alter their behavior, we examined whether sex workers experienced positive or negative affect as benefits or costs of sex work. Twelve participants reported experiencing mostly positive emotions at work, and fifteen participants reported experiencing mostly negative emotions at work. Barbie exemplifies participants who reported experiencing mostly positive emotions at work. She said that, “it’s always like a little bit of adrenaline, excitement...I feel sexual. I feel in control.”

Elle exemplifies participants who reported experiencing mostly negative emotions at work. She said that, “I feel frustrated. Sometimes, I feel really sad, you know? I get down, or I feel disappointed.” Elle later added that while engaging in sex work, “I feel ugly. I feel used.”

Differential reinforcement - Costs of emotional labor. Participants were categorized according to whether they experienced costs associated with performing emotional labor as part of sex work. Seventeen participants reported experiencing such costs, and ten participants reported experiencing no such costs. Various types of costs were described. One cost was that, like Hochschild’s (1983) airline workers, participants had difficulty getting out of character when “off the clock.” Dana said, “Doing this with a lot of different people” makes it hard to emotionally “connect” with her romantic partner. Chloe, who said that she performed emotional labor through “method acting,” described having trouble turning off her sex worker persona in her personal life. She explained, “I have to draw a line between who I am at work and who I really am.” She said that if she fails to draw the line, “The hardest part is in my real life, when I’m dating, sometimes (my sex worker persona) seeps into me...and I become a role within my relationship. I have to check that because playing a role is not about true connection.” Beyond having trouble “connecting”, Chloe explained, “I’ll do the things that (my sex worker persona) would do that normally, in dating, I never would do.” The problem is that, “I won’t speak up for what I want.” Chloe intended to ask her therapist for, “help repairing the bleeding between (my sex worker persona) and me.”

Another cost of emotional labor for several participants was difficulty drawing emotional boundaries or lines for consumers. Tristen explained that, “because I’m a caring person,” consumers mistake her kindness for affection. At times, this works in her favor because “they’ll put money in my account” when she wants to take a vacation. The cost is that, lately, “they’re trying to be too personal.” Vicky told a story about a consumer who “got too attached in that he thought that I was gonna pick up my life and move to Brazil” with him because she “kind of made things blurry.” In contrast, participants who had no difficulty drawing emotional boundaries for consumers, such as Helen, said things like, “you can’t let them believe this is real for that long.” Using “a deep voice”, Helen would sternly tell consumers, “No. I’m not in love with you.” Similarly, Kelly told consumers, “No, I don’t love you.” She explained that, “I never try to cross that line, and I never want them to have those types of feelings.” For Kelly, managing emotions was a skill that she honed through prior experiences with consumers who crossed the line and became “stalkers,” including one consumer who “would stand outside my window yelling, ‘Kelly, I love you!’” while she was in an appointment with another consumer.

Another cost of emotional labor was difficulty managing negative emotions. Courtney said, “Some of the guys, they just make you so mad, but you have to just be calm.” However, she conceded that, “I get annoyed easily.” Thus, any job that requires Courtney to perform customer service might be challenging for her. Tristen described having difficulty when “somebody can come in...he’s like all upset”, and he expects her

to be empathetic. This expectation to provide emotional support angers Tristen because consoling consumers requires extra effort.

Sex Worker Identity Commitment

Ten participants had low commitment to the sex worker identity, seven participants had moderate commitment to the sex worker identity, and ten participants had high commitment to the sex worker identity.

Low commitment. Participants with low sex worker identity commitment reported that income was all they would lose if they stopped engaging in sex work, and that the loss of income would not be a problem for them. Wendy (22 years old, Latina, 1 year of experience) exemplifies participants with low commitment. She said that “a lot of money” for shopping at the mall was the only thing she would have to give up if she stopped engaging in sex work, and that “I wouldn't really care” about losing the income or relationships with consumers. Wendy said she, “would just quit” sex work if she was, for some reason, prevented from advertising her sex work services online.

Moderate commitment. Participants with moderate sex worker identity commitment reported that they would miss the interactions and/or relationships they had with consumers if they stopped engaging in sex work. Crystal (24 years old, white, 6 years of experience) exemplifies participants with moderate commitment. She said that “if the internet crashed on me” and advertising her sex work services online was no longer an option, then she would “be screwed” because she would miss the money and interactions with consumers. However, she said that, “I’m pretty sure I could just turn away and never look back.”

High commitment. Participants with high sex worker identity commitment reported that if they stopped engaging in sex work, they would have to give up many things. For instance, these participants said that their entire lives depended on sex work, they would miss their reputations as sex workers, their sex worker personas, and/or their relationships with consumers. Barbie exemplifies participants with high commitment. When asked what she stood to lose if she could no longer engage in sex work, Barbie responded, “My life...I wouldn’t know what to do with myself.” If she were, for some reason, prevented from advertising her sex work services online, Barbie said that, “I would find a way to still ho.”

Sex Worker Identity Prominence

Eleven participants had low sex worker identity prominence, ten participants had moderate sex worker identity prominence, and six participants had high sex worker identity prominence.

Low prominence. Participants who had low prominence reported that the sex worker role was less important to them than all other roles, such as friend, sister, daughter, student, and/or mother. For example, Crystal said that, “escorting is last.” For Heidi (24 years old, white, 7 years of experience), being a sex worker was “not a very big deal” and “not tremendously” important to how she viewed herself. Other roles, such as being a friend, were more important to her, and being a mother was, “way more important! Hell yeah.” She was unconcerned with being a good sex worker or receiving praise for her work. Regarding consumers, she said, “If you don’t like me, fuck you. I don’t have time. I had to spend twenty-something years trying to love myself.”

Moderate prominence. Participants who had moderate prominence reported that the sex worker role was no more or less important to them than other roles, the sex worker role was more important than some other roles, and/or being good at sex work was important to them. Molly (19 years old, Latina, 1 year of experience) exemplifies participants with moderate prominence. She said that, compared to the other roles she inhabits, being a sex worker was “pretty important” and that her job as a sex worker influenced how she sees herself in her other roles. She explained that, “cause if I'm not doing good, then I'm gonna look at myself like, ‘you’re just wasting your time’.” Thus, being good at sex work was important to Molly. She was concerned with determining “things I need to work on to make my customer service a little bit better.”

High prominence. Participants who had high prominence reported that being a sex worker was “very important” to them and/or that they were constantly engaged in activities related to the identity (e.g., “hustling” men). For example, Kelly said that, “being an escort is my entire life.” Nina said that, compared to other roles, “I think my work is more, it’s more like my lifestyle, rather than work. Because no matter what I'm doing, it's a part of it. I would say it's a massive part because I'm always working. If I go out to the club, and a guy talks to me, I'm gonna hit him up for money.”

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter described the sample in terms of differential association, definitions of sex work, differential reinforcement, differential emotional reinforcement, the costs of emotional labor, sex worker identity commitment, and sex worker identity prominence.

CHAPTER VI. How Differential Association Relates to Definitions, Differential Reinforcement, Identity Commitment, and Identity Prominence

This chapter reports findings about the relation of differential association, as measured by first, intensity of ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people and second, exposure to consumers and sex workers, to constructs from Social Learning Theory and Identity Theory. First, it presents results on the relation between differential association and definitions of sex work. The present study hypothesizes that intensity of ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people will be positively associated with having favorable definitions of sex work (Hypothesis 1), and exposure to consumers and sex workers will be positively associated with having favorable definitions of sex work (Hypothesis 2).

Second, the chapter presents results on the relation between differential association and differential reinforcement. It is hypothesized that intensity of ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people will be positively associated with differential reinforcement for engaging in sex work (Hypothesis 3) and differential emotional reinforcement (Hypothesis 4), and negatively related to emotional labor costs (Hypothesis 5). It is also hypothesized that exposure to consumers and sex workers will be positively associated with differential reinforcement for engaging in sex work (Hypothesis 6).

Third, the chapter presents results on the relations between differential association, sex worker identity commitment, and sex worker identity prominence. It is hypothesized that intensity of ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people

will be positively associated with sex worker identity commitment (Hypothesis 7) and sex worker identity prominence (Hypothesis 8).

Relation of Differential Association to Definitions of Sex Work

Hypothesis 1 was not supported; intensity of ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people was not related to definitions of sex work. As shown in Table 3, regardless of the intensity of ties, many participants had very favorable definitions of sex work. That said, among participants with strong ties, all had very favorable definitions whereas participants with weak ties were diverse in their definitions, with some having favorable or very favorable definitions and others having unfavorable or very unfavorable definitions.

Rachel (27 years old, white, 8 years of experience) exemplifies participants who had strong ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people and very favorable definitions of sex work. Rachel, who lived in a “house that gets full of hos,” viewed sex work as “widely accepted.” She defined sex work as “therapy,” stating that sex workers “keep marriages together.” Rachel cited “honesty” as her most important personality trait, and in describing sex work, she emphasized that it is honest work. Rachel reasoned that all women “love to be sexual” unless they are “scared to let that beast out.” Thus, sex workers are honest with themselves. Furthermore, sex work requires discretion. About the typical consumer, she said, “He has a life. He has a marriage. He doesn’t want somebody calling his home or falling in love, bothering him, or ruining his family. They don’t want to lose their careers or have people know that they just wanna have fun.” As opposed to “square” women, sex workers are “straight forward because (consumers)

know that we're just there for the money and a good time." Exchanging sex for money made Rachel feel "powerful." Thus, she defined sex work as an occupation that empowers women and gives them honest relationships with men, and provides an important "service for mankind." Her description of herself matches her description of sex work.

Barbie (21 years old, white, 8 years of experience) exemplifies participants who had moderate ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people and very favorable definitions of sex work. She cited "fun" and "loving" as her most important personality traits. Among other things, she described sex work as being sociable, entertaining consumers, "talking and comforting someone to just being someone's friend." Like Rachel, she felt empowered by sex work, saying "I control what happens within that time," during appointments with consumers. She explained that the illegality of sex work was a problem for her only in that "it makes it more dangerous. If it was legal, girls would be safer." Barbie was not bothered by the stigmatization of sex work, saying that most people, "grew up in a different lifestyle. So they wouldn't understand the way I live. So it's pretty much lack of knowledge that makes them judge me." She was not "raised with (common) values," and her formative years lacked "structure" because her mother was a sex worker. Her favorable definition of sex work was conditioned at an early age. She said, "I just learned from what I saw." She never defined sex work as immoral "because the laws are ridiculous." Her description of herself matches her description of sex work. She even said, "Being sexual is part of my personality. It's fun to me."

Polly (38 years old, white, 3 years of experience) exemplifies participants who had weak ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people and very favorable definitions of sex work. She described sex work as “playing dress-up every day,” and “who doesn't like wearing sexy outfits or lingerie?” One of her main job functions was to please people, and make “someone's day just by being me.” Thus, she described sex work as a good fit for her personality. Like other participants with very favorable definitions of sex work, she reported that sex work consisted of being sociable and “talking to people.” Unlike participants who had unfavorable definitions, Polly did not view marketing to consumers as mundane and tedious. She said, “I don't experience any rudeness” in interactions with consumers. Polly said “I'll accommodate the cheapos” when consumers haggle with her, which was a common grievance among participants. She did not define sex work as immoral and explained, “I don't think I hurt anyone. I don't know if I hurt myself. Maybe, but I don't feel guilty. I'm just providing something. It's just my niche. It's what I do.” After her entrance into sex work, “I looked at myself in the mirror and I was like, ‘I could do this all day long.’ And I was like, ‘Is that good?’ And I started laughing.”

Hypothesis 2 was not supported; exposure to consumers and sex workers was not related to definitions of sex work. As shown in Table 4, regardless of the level of exposure, many participants had very favorable definitions of sex work.

Natalie (20 years old, Asian, 2 years of experience) exemplifies participants with high exposure to participants in the sex work industry and very favorable definitions of sex work. Natalie immersed herself into the world of online sex work to learn about sex workers and consumers. Natalie described her job duties as entailing “social networking.”

In describing her job duties, she also said that, “I spend a lot of time talking, and engaging in conversation, getting to know them (i.e., consumers) as a person. I want them to feel like that's their time away. They're escaping from work, their real world...this is their time to be happy and be okay.” Furthermore, Natalie said that she never felt guilty about being a sex worker because, “This is a job to me. I mean, I take it seriously. If somebody were to order something at McDonalds, you want that good customer service, right?” This orientation toward sex work was perhaps shaped more by internal factors than social ties. It was important to Natalie that she be viewed as “mature” and “responsible”. She connected her self-perception to her perception of sex work, saying “because I grew up, I see myself differently” and that affected her approach to sex work. Her description of herself matches her description of sex work.

Angie (26 years old, white, 4 years of experience) exemplifies participants who had moderate exposure to participants in the sex work industry and very favorable definitions of sex work. Her definition of sex work was perhaps shaped more by internal factors than social ties. Angie described herself as a “fun” and “very outgoing” person. She repeated this claim several times throughout the interview. Like other participants with very favorable definitions, she said sex work consists of “pleasing other people” and being “social.” Like Natalie, she compared sex work to other service work, saying, “It’s the same as any other job.” Angie never defined sex work as immoral, even when she entered the industry. She did not feel stigmatized, or treated as a deviant. “Cops harass everybody. It’s no different in this.”

Susie (36 years old, white, 5 years of experience) exemplifies participants with low exposure to participants in the sex work industry and very favorable definitions of sex work. For her, sex work consisted of listening to consumers “complain about their problems,” and “making the time enjoyable.” Susie said that “treating people respectfully” had always been important to her, indicating that her definition of sex work may be conditioned by her earlier socialization. She generally transacted with regular consumers and hosted lengthy appointments, of two or more hours. Her sessions entailed socializing and pretending to have a “boyfriend.” She did not define sex work as immoral and said, “people do bad things all the time” that are far worse than sex work. In particular, she argued that as opposed to outdoor sex work, indoor sex work should not offend anybody. Moreover, “it is nobody’s business” what she does in the privacy of her home and she “isn’t hurting anybody.” She said that “laws are absurd and random.” Susie also cited “integrity and honesty” as her most important personality traits. Perhaps this self-perception encouraged her to define her behavior as moral (i.e., to avoid cognitive dissonance).

Subsequent analyses showed that when the definition of sex work was operationalized narrowly in terms of morality (is it immoral or not), exposure to consumers and sex workers was related to definitions (see Table 5). However, the contrast in definitions was strongest between participants with high exposure and participants with low exposure.

Kelly (25 years old, white, 5 years of experience) exemplifies participants with high exposure to participants in the sex work industry who did not define sex work as

immoral. She emphasized that sex work is “between two consensual people,” and she does not “think about it as immoral or degrading at all.” Rather than redefining sex work as wrong after her sex work arrests, Kelly increasingly questioned the legitimacy of legislation that outlaws sex work. She argued, “It’s a waste of taxpayers’ money to have, when you get arrested, not just one guy coming in and arresting you. It’s like eight people: a whole entire vice squad. And the taxpayers are paying this entire vice squad to arrest me.” She reasoned that the police should pursue dangerous criminals.

Hypothetically addressing police officers, she said, “You couldn’t find a meth lab? Meth labs blow buildings up. Or, you couldn’t find something else to do with your time? Drunk drivers kill people. I don’t drink and drive. I don’t shoot anybody. I don’t rob banks. I don’t rape people.”

Dana (23 years old, Latina, 5 years of experience) exemplifies participants who had low exposure to participants in the sex work industry and defined sex work as immoral. Dana defined sex work as immoral for two reasons. First, she explained that “if you’re in a relationship, obviously, you’ll feel guilty about” engaging in sex work. Because she had a romantic partner, Dana said that, “I feel bad about it, and I know that he can’t be that happy about it.” Second, she said, “I do feel guilty because I was brought up as a Christian.” However, Dana said that, “in the past, I don’t think I did (feel guilty) at all, no. But more so now that I’m older.” Being a sex worker and being religious made her feel “kind of like being a hypocrite.”

This finding is consistent with Warr’s (2002) review of empirical research informed by Social Learning Theory, which finds that most studies fail to find the

theoretically proposed relation. There are two possible explanations for why the pattern does not appear in the present study. First, the earliest version of Social Learning Theory argued that adolescent delinquency results from association with delinquent peers. It is possible that the social ties between people and their criminal associates are less critical to their evaluation of criminal behavior in adulthood. Evidence of this claim can be found in the examples of Barbie and Susie, presented above, and in other cases that were not presented above because they did not serve to exemplify the primary relations. For instance, Sofia and Doris developed unfavorable definitions of sex work when they were young, and those definitions never changed. Second, it is possible that once people have initiated criminal behavior, the relevance of social ties to how people define criminal behavior declines and some other mechanism of effect gains relevance. The above examples illustrate that favorable definitions are positively related to matches between self-descriptions (the qualities sex workers say they have) and job descriptions (the qualities sex workers say the job requires). Thus, in adulthood, personality may be related to definitions of crime.

Relation of Differential Association to Differential Reinforcement, Differential Emotional Reinforcement, and Costs of Emotional Labor

Support was not found for Hypothesis 3; intensity of ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people was not related to differential reinforcement. As shown in Table 6, regardless of the intensity of ties, many participants experienced a net benefit of sex work. That said, a majority of participants with weak ties described the costs of sex work as exceeding its benefits.

Subsequent analyses revealed that the intensity of ties to people outside the sex work industry, regardless of the intensity of ties to consumers and sex workers (i.e., association – in particular, conventional association, rather than differential association), was related to differential reinforcement (see Table 7). Participants with strong ties to people outside of the sex work industry were more likely than other participants to describe the costs of sex work as exceeding its benefits. Participants with moderate ties to other people were more or less equally divided among those who described the benefits as exceeding the costs and those who described the costs as exceeding the benefits. Participants with weak ties to other people were more likely to describe the benefits of sex work as exceeding the costs.

Chloe (38 years old, white, 9 years of experience) exemplifies participants with strong ties to people outside the sex work industry who described the costs of sex work as exceeding the benefits. Her ties to family strengthened when she told them about sex work because now, “I don’t feel like I have this deep, dark secret that’s keeping me from” being close with them. Precisely because she had strong ties with people outside of the sex work industry, Chloe found sex work to be unrewarding. She explained that not having “a legitimate job...affects my self-esteem to some level” because “my job is not respected. I can’t come out and say that, ‘Hey, this is what I do’ and people say, ‘Hey, I’m proud of you’, and Dad’s like, ‘Good going!’...and that’s important to me.” Chloe derived little intrinsic satisfaction from sex work because her job was “not doing anything really to change the world or help anyone.” Chloe rated her job satisfaction as a “six” on a scale of one to ten (with ten being “extremely happy”) because work means

“I’m not doing what I wanna do, or being with the person I wanna be with, or with my friends.” Chloe said she “hated” that sex work “prevents me from being able to have a healthy relationship and true love.” Finally, Chloe said the costs exceeded the benefits of sex work because it took away “things internal, little pieces of...innocence, spirit that I don’t think I’ll ever get back.”

Heidi (24 years old, white, 7 years of experience) exemplifies participants with moderate ties to people outside the sex work industry who described the costs of sex work as exceeding the benefits. She explained that it was difficult for her to match the prices of competitors because “girls are willing to give more because they are managed (i.e., they have pimps). And some of them are forced to do more for less (money).” She believed that prices were established by “supply and demand” and those factors were decreasing her revenue. In the past, she was happier with sex work because, “I thought the money would never stop. When you’re making over \$15,000 a month, money is no object to you. You’re like, ‘I’m just gonna make money and do whatever the fuck I want’!” Heidi listed many costs of sex work, including that, “I don’t like dealing with mean, rude, obnoxious, disrespectful idiots. And demanding. And I don’t deal with that very well.” Furthermore, she said, “This shit is stressful. It’s stressful, surviving this way” because “you gotta deal with different people and you get scared and nervous about someone may try to hurt you, rape you, kill you, and cops.” She rated her job satisfaction as “eight” on a scale of one to ten.

Wendy (22 years old, Latina, 1 year of experience) exemplifies participants with moderate ties to people outside of the sex work industry who described the benefits of

sex work as exceeding the costs. The only thing she disliked about sex work was dealing with rude consumers, and she had strategies for minimizing this cost. “Say a person writes me rude. I won’t see him. Because if they're rude through the text message, then most likely, they'll be rude when you see them in person.” She added, “When they're rude in person, that means they can get physical or something bad could happen. But it hasn't happened to me.” She liked having the autonomy to “make my own price and choose who I want to see. So if I don't want to see you, then I won’t see you.” She rated her job satisfaction as “ten” on a scale of one to ten, saying, “I like what I do. I'm getting paid for it. If I wasn't getting paid, basically you're giving it for free. Before, I would be fuck buddies; you basically give it for free. Now, I can charge so I won't feel like I'm being used. They're using me, but I'm using them. So we're both using each other.”

Chanel (27 years old, white, 4 years of experience) exemplifies participants with weak ties to people outside of the sex work industry who described the benefits of sex work as exceeding the costs. Describing the benefits of sex work, she said, “It’s fun because I’m a sexual person. Having sex with different types of people is fun.” She enjoyed the excitement and adventure of sex work, saying, “I like meeting lots of different people that I would never have talked to or met.” She described “fun” experiences she had with consumers in their workplaces, at a hospital, and a “classroom during Christmas break in a high school. I went there two or three times. I had to jump the fence.” One of her regular consumers would spontaneously hire her for overnight trips – for example, to Catalina Island. “We would go at the last minute and have an hour to get to the boat landing. That was fun.” She avoided some costs of sex work by

transacting mainly with regular consumers and minimizing the time she spent in hotel rooms. The only thing she disliked about sex work was “people’s attitudes sometimes, and they throw fits. Some people’s personalities. Not everybody is polite.” Dealing with rude consumers was a commonly cited cost across participants in the sample. Chanel rated her job satisfaction as “eight” on a scale of one to ten.

Support was found for Hypothesis 4; intensity of ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people was related to differential emotional reinforcement. As shown in Table 8, all participants with strong ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people reported experiencing mostly positive emotions at work. Participants with moderate ties were split among those who experienced mostly positive emotions at work and those who experienced mostly negative emotions at work. A majority of participants with weak ties reported experiencing mostly negative emotions at work. Notice in the following examples that the emotional experiences of sex workers in their interactions with consumers vary according to their sense of control over the environment. This is consistent with research in psychology that finds locus of control determines job satisfaction and intentions to exit (Judge and Illies 2002; Spector 1982).

Rachel exemplifies participants who had strong ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people and experienced mostly positive emotions at work. She said that she felt “flirty, fun, upbeat, a little funny, and sexual” at work. She elaborated that it was fun to “role-play,” and she was proud of giving a good performance. She said, “It took practice; you’re acting.” At other times, she felt, “very powerful, dominant.” Her approach towards working with consumers was “if you are coming to spend some time

with me, then you're gonna have to do things my way...It's not you do whatever you want to do to, or with, me. It's me doing what I do, and you enjoying that time with me."

Vicky (24 years old, black, 3 years of experience) exemplifies participants who had moderate ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people and experienced mostly positive emotions at work. She said that her emotions "depend on the person" she is interacting with, and she typically feels "pleased" and "wanted". Sometimes, she feels "frustrated" or "even irritated with some people." Often, "I find new connections and new friendships" that lead to feeling "helped" and "appreciated." She concluded, "It just really depends on the person. But in good situations, you feel all things good."

Courtney (20 years old, white, 1 year of experience) exemplifies participants who had moderate ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people and experienced mostly negative emotions at work. Dealing with consumers was sometimes "frustrating as hell." She felt "mad" and "annoyed." She explained that she would try to "block out negative stuff" and remain "focused on making money."

Doris (20 years old, white, 2 years of experience) exemplifies participants who had weak ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people and experienced mostly negative emotions at work. Regarding work, Doris said, "sometimes it can leave me depressed. Sometimes it can leave me confused. Sometimes it can leave me angry. I get angry." She explained that, "You would think being an escort is so easy, just make easy money. But everything's very, very stressful." She listed a variety of daily frustrations due to conditions beyond her control, such as having a broken toilet in her hotel room that causes her to cancel an appointment. She has to respond to approximately

eighty or ninety emails from prospective consumers to generate three or four appointments and said that “it can be stressful.” These negative feelings were compounded by her determination to make money. She would stay up late, all night sometimes, to maximize the number of appointments she conducted. She explained, “I can get four or five people just from like 11:00 p.m. to like 4:00 a.m. It’s crazy. Other times, I’ll see one person. That’s another thing why I don’t like this. Very unpredictable. And some clients are very rude, and they think they can come whenever they want.” She said that her exhaustion added to her stress; “the body just needs sleep.”

As Table 8 indicates, seven cases deviated from the expected pattern in that they experienced mostly positive emotions at work despite having weak ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people. An analysis of these cases revealed that five of them (Crystal, Dana, Helen, Susie, and Wendy), despite having strong ties to people outside of the sex work industry, had strong ties to consumers that fostered positive emotions in the workplace. For example, Crystal had strong ties to people outside the sex work industry that rendered her ties to people inside the industry relatively weak. However, her ties to consumers were strong and she said, “Positive emotions: that’s the best word to use” to describe her feelings at work. She explained, “You emotionally have to have some kind of connection” with consumers. Similarly, Dana said that, “Since sex relieves a lot of stress, it’s a lot of good emotions that come with this.” Susie feels “happy and good,” especially when consumers compliment her. Although differential association helped to explain differential emotional reinforcement across the sample, it is not surprising that association with people in the workplace was particularly relevant in some cases,

regardless of association with people outside the workplace. People may have positive interactions at work despite having strong ties with family and friends.

The two remaining cases that deviated from the expected pattern are exemplified by the case of Kelly who attributed her positive emotional experience to sex. Kelly had weak ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people and experienced mostly positive emotions at work. Kelly said, “I love what I do. I wouldn’t choose a different career path than this.” Kelly enjoyed interacting with consumers, but did not have strong ties with any particular consumers and said “I never spend free time with anybody.” At the same time, her constellation of weak ties was fulfilling and she preferred it to romantic relationships. “The best type of relationship to have when you do this is like what I have with my guys, with my dates.” Regarding the emotions she experienced at work, Kelly said “You feel good whenever you’re having sex. Sex feels good no matter what. Most (feelings) are good.” Kelly consciously labored to produce positive emotions within herself and consumers, saying “I like to feel good cause I like to enjoy it cause the more I enjoy it, the more they like it, and they’ll wanna come back.” She explained, “I try to produce happiness.” Thus, for at least some sex workers, sex produces emotional rewards.

Hypothesis 5 was not supported; intensity of ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people was not related to emotional labor costs. As shown in Table 9, across all levels of the intensity of ties, participants had the same likelihood of experiencing costs associated with performing emotional labor.

Elle exemplifies participants with weak ties who experienced costs associated with performing emotional labor. In particular, she described consumers as demanding more of an emotional performance than she wants to provide, saying “I’m not gonna go out of my way” to make them happy because “I’m very angry that I’m doing this, already.” She said that consumers are “already getting something (i.e., sex).” Without management pressuring her to smile and conduct deep acting to generate happiness within consumers, she negotiated the feeling rules with consumers herself, and experienced that negotiation as a cost. Furthermore, she described having difficulty connecting with her romantic partner because she turned off her emotions at work. She said that engaging in emotional labor as a sex worker “makes you a little less sensitive.”

Chanel exemplifies participants with moderate ties who experienced costs associated with performing emotional labor. One of the costs she listed when describing what she dislikes about sex work was “I have problems with guys who can’t accept the reality.” This cost was described in Chapter 5 as difficulty drawing emotional boundaries or lines for consumers. Chanel explained that consumers would get emotionally attached to her, and because she is a nice person, she did not want to hurt their feelings.

Eva had strong ties and experienced costs associated with performing emotional labor. Like Chanel, she had difficulty drawing boundaries for consumers. Specifically, her problem was that, “One time, I started falling in love with one of my clients.” She encouraged consumers to become attached to her, rather than draw clear lines for them, because she recognized the benefits of engaging in emotional labor. She explained, “I do a lot to keep my clients happy” because she wanted to retain regular consumers. She said,

“I do a lot to keep my clients my clients” because “I don’t like to meet new people.” She described costs associated with building a base of consumers as exceeding the costs of emotional labor required to retain consumers. She said, “I’m gonna put on my best face (i.e., engage in emotional labor)” because “if it was up to me, I would just see my regulars all the time.”

These narratives indicate that sex work involves emotional labor and it can be experienced as costly. However, whether it is experienced as costly appears not to be determined by sex workers’ relative ties. Instead, it appears to be determined by whether it affects other relationships, such as with a romantic partner in the case of Elle, or it forces the sex worker to act outside her comfort zone to preserve the business relationship, as in the cases of Chanel and Eva. Chanel would have to not be herself (i.e. “nice”) to communicate that the relationship is strictly business. Similarly, Elle said, “I’m proud of being honest” and that being “blunt” was her most important personality trait. Consequently, she was uncomfortable engaging in emotional labor. She said, “I’m not fake. I don’t do the acting thing. I don’t put on a show. I don’t switch personalities. What you see is what you get.” These examples also illustrate that whether emotional labor is experienced as costly is negatively related to matches between self-descriptions (the qualities sex workers say they have) and job descriptions (the qualities sex workers say the job requires). Throughout the sample, all but two of the participants who indicated that sex work is a poor fit for their personalities experienced emotional labor costs.

Support was not found for Hypothesis 6; exposure to consumers and sex workers was not related to differential reinforcement (see Table 10). Rachel exemplifies

participants with high exposure to consumers and sex workers who described the benefits of sex work as exceeding the costs. Rachel rated her job satisfaction as a nine out of ten and said, “I’m very happy right now” with sex work. Like most other benefitters, Rachel did not perceive the stigma surrounding sex work to be a cost. Chapter 4 mentioned that sex work did not interfere with her relationships outside of the industry. Therefore, she did not experience hiding sex work as a cost. Unlike most participants who described the costs of sex work as exceeding its benefits, Rachel did not list autonomy, convenience, or flexibility as benefits. Rather, what she liked about sex work was “the experience. ‘Cause hos is the realest bitches ever. There are no other bitches like us. We are the shit.” She experienced both extrinsic and intrinsic satisfaction, saying, “I like having sex for money with random men...I can give them they confidence, make them feel good. So they might have a good day, and now they smiling at this person, and now that person is happy, too. I just chain reacted all that. I’m doing a service for mankind.” She said that sex work “doesn’t get in the way with (her priorities in life) because it’s one of the highest paid professions if you do it right and invest your money right.”

Jamie (24 years old, Middle-Eastern, 1 year of experience) exemplifies participants with moderate exposure to consumers and sex workers who described the benefits of sex work as exceeding the costs. She enjoyed “meeting new people, building relationships, and having fun.” Thus, she experienced intrinsic satisfaction and reasoned, “You can’t do anything just for money. You’re not gonna be happy.” The only cost she cited was dealing with “rude people” and “people who play games, take advantage by trying to get more than I offer.” She rated her job satisfaction as “a good eight. There’s

always room for improvement.” Like Rachel, she explained that sex work was compatible with her priorities in life because “It allows me to save up to invest in what I want to do.” In part, Jamie attributed her satisfaction with sex work to her relationships with people outside the industry. She explained, “It's important to be good to the people in your life, and be happy, in order to be an entertainer, therapist and all that. Because you need the proper support system. You need people understanding your lifestyle. You need people to be there to listen to you when you have certain issues.”

Courtney exemplifies participants with low exposure to consumers and sex workers who described the benefits of sex work as exceeding the costs. The only cost she cited was dealing with “the assholes.” That cost was overshadowed by her enjoyment of “meeting new people”, making money, and traveling. She rated her job satisfaction as “eight” on a scale of one to ten. She explained that, “I have a goal, and I'm just doing it.” Sex work contributed to her goal of saving money so that she could have financial stability when she attends college. She said that sex work did not interfere with having a romantic relationship because she did not want one, it did not interfere with her family ties because her parents and siblings had moved out of state, and it did not interfere with her friendships outside of the industry because “I don't hide nothing.”

These examples illustrate that when sex work did not interfere with the sex workers' social relationships or priorities outside of sex work, the sex workers experienced net benefits. Thus, exposure to people in the sex work industry may be less important than whether sex work is compatible or interferes with social relationships and interests outside the industry in determining whether sex work is differentially reinforced.

Throughout the sample, the benefits and costs of sex work that were related to overall assessments of job satisfaction were not produced by interactions with consumers and sex workers. The costs that distinguished benefitters from non-benefitters were stigmatization of sex work, hiding sex work from friends, family, and romantic partners, and unpredictable revenue. The benefits that distinguished benefitters from non-benefitters were autonomy, convenience, flexibility, and independence.

Relation of Differential Association to Sex Worker Identity Commitment

Support was found for Hypothesis 7; differential association, operationalized as intensity of ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people, was related to sex worker identity commitment. As shown in Table 11, all participants with strong ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people had high commitment to the sex worker identity. Participants with moderate ties divided among the categories of identity commitment. A majority of participants with weak ties had low commitment to the sex worker identity.

Eva (22 years old, black, 1 year of experience) exemplifies participants with strong ties and a high commitment to the sex worker identity. She said, “If they had fantasy provider of the year, I would love to be the fan favorite,” adding confidently, “I would be fan favorite.” Eva explained that, “I can’t quit this. The fact that I’ve invested so much of myself to build this persona and this money train, I could never retire.” Regarding her sex worker persona, Eva said, “I have done work on her. She has become a person that people identify with.” Eva wanted to develop her brand in multiple states and take her persona “to different heights.”

Vicky exemplifies participants with moderate ties and a moderate commitment to the sex worker identity. She said that if she were forced to quit sex work, “I would be giving up my primary income...not really part of myself, but mostly some of my relationships.” She clarified that, “if I was to retire tomorrow, I wouldn’t be like, ‘Oh my god!’”

Sofia (22 years old, mixed, 1 year of experience) exemplifies participants with weak ties and a low commitment to the sex worker identity. “I really did not want this to be the way that I lived my life. I never thought I would end up doing this at all. So being kind of caught up in this...is hard.” Sofia said that sometimes, while she was working, “I would feel like, ‘Wow, I really need to throw up after this session ‘cause I feel really disgusted with myself.’” Sofia said she would only miss the income if she quit sex work, but even then, the income was no longer important to her. “You need to learn to be humble and live a simple life. You can’t always think of the crazy, high-end items and the materialistic things because the material things don’t get you anywhere in life.” Sofia had alternative income from another job, and she was preparing to enter medical school.

Fourteen cases deviated from the expected pattern. Some participants with moderate ties had high or low commitment, and some participants with weak ties had high or moderate commitment. An analysis of these cases revealed that association, independent of differential association, was important for identity commitment. Seven of the eleven participants with moderate or high commitment and weak ties (differential association) had moderate or strong ties with people inside the industry (association). For example, Polly (38 years old, white, 3 years of experience) had weak ties and high

commitment. She had strong ties to people inside the sex work industry that made her strong ties to people outside the industry less relevant to her identity commitment. If she could no longer engage in sex work, Polly said she would be giving up “money, but then a lot of it would be like a whole social aspect of my life, too, because some days, my only interaction is with my clients.” In short, she said, “I’d be losing a whole lot.” According to Identity Theory, people outside the sex work industry would have an indirect influence on commitment to the sex worker identity by verifying alternative identities, and people inside the industry would have a direct influence on that commitment. Thus, it is not surprising that ties to people inside the sex work industry (i.e., association) also related to sex worker identity commitment.

Relation of Differential Association to Sex Worker Identity Prominence

Partial support was found for Hypothesis 8 that intensity of ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people would be positively associated with sex worker identity prominence. As shown in Table 12, participants with strong ties were more likely to have higher sex worker identity prominence, whereas participants with weak ties were more likely to have lower sex worker identity prominence. However, participants with moderate ties were not easily distinguished from either participants with strong ties or participants with weak ties.

Rachel had strong ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people and high sex worker identity prominence. Regarding sex work, she said, “It’s made me who I am. I like who I am.” Being a sex worker was important to how she saw herself, and her self-perception was positive. Furthermore, she said, “my work life is my personal life,”

demonstrating that her sex worker identity was constantly activated. “Everybody that knows me, they’re gonna know what I do” because “I’m always doing something that pertains to it.”

In contrast to Rachel, Crystal (24 years old, white, 6 years of experience) exemplifies participants who had weak ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people and low sex worker identity prominence. “I’ve helped my dad out financially...I helped him because he has so many kids, so I take care of my twin younger brothers because I can.” Her friends and family know about her work. Crystal said, “I make too much money and don’t do enough for people not to catch on” to her participation in sex work. When her friends and family found out that she engages in sex work, “some people were accepting. Some weren’t.” However, about her closest friend from childhood who became distant when she learned that Crystal engages in sex work, Crystal said, “we’re back to being best friends.” She explained, “Since I lost my dad and my grandma, I am a hundred percent family orientated...I really do cherish the people that mean a lot to me because you don’t know what’s gonna happen tomorrow.” Thus, compared to other roles she holds, Crystal said that, “escorting is last.” In particular, she said “when you grow and you have a family...my son is the most important thing in the world to me. He comes first. This (sex work) is last on the list now.” She clarified that, “I need to make money. If there was no money involved, I wouldn’t do it.”

Participants with moderate ties were diverse in their level of identity prominence. Chanel fit the expected pattern. She had moderate ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people and moderate sex worker identity prominence. She said that being

a sex worker was currently more important than being a friend, and that she wanted to be a good sex worker, but less important than becoming a good student and developing alternative identities. Thus, sex work interfered with her long-term goals, and created conflict between her role as a sex worker and her other roles. She said that, “I do want to go to school so I can get a degree so I can get a real career. I want to have like a real life. I feel like this takes over everything.”

In contrast to Chanel, however, other participants with moderate ties had either high or low sex worker identity prominence. In addition, some participants with strong or weak ties did not report the expected level of identity prominence. An analysis of these cases revealed that among participants with moderate ties and high or low prominence, all had moderate ties to people outside the industry, suggesting that their prominence depends on association with people outside the industry rather than on differential association. For example, Vicky said, “I’m out here by myself,” and “there are times when I have to separate myself from my family.” However, she described her sex worker identity prominence as low, saying, “to be a good friend, good daughter, and good sister, those are more important to me than anything, even work.”

Among the participants with weak ties and high prominence, other factors were associated with sex worker identity prominence, including that weak ties with people outside the industry facilitated involvement in sex work (e.g., Nina) and interaction with people inside the industry provided satisfying interaction (e.g., Polly and Kelly). Kelly said that her relationships with consumers were important to her because “they’re my guys”, and she valued them as a group despite having arms-length ties with each

individual. Although she had relationships with women outside of the industry that she valued, as mentioned in Chapter 5, she said “being an escort is my entire life. I thrive on it. It’s very important.” Among the participants with weak ties and moderate sex worker identity prominence, their prominence was perhaps based more on their ties to people inside the industry than to people outside of it. Five of them had moderate ties to consumers and sex workers ((Doris, Jamie, Molly, Susie, and Tristen) and two had strong ties to consumers and sex workers (Dana and Nelly).

The one participant, Eva, with strong ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people and moderate sex worker identity prominence attempted to deemphasize her sex worker identity because she had allowed it to become too important at one point in her life, saying “I kind of let myself become this mega-ho.” She had spent more time travelling for work than she presently felt was healthy, saying, “I used to feel like that’s who I was: I travel, (consumers) pay my bills, that type of mindset. Instead of trying to get it for what I need, I let it get me.” Thus, her sex worker identity was still important to her, but she currently maintained it at a moderate level of prominence to compensate for previously overemphasizing it. Unlike participants with high prominence who described their sex worker identity as being “very important” to them, Eva said “I let it be a piece of me, but not the complete picture.”

Summary

In conclusion, only two of the eight hypotheses involving differential association in this chapter were fully supported, and one was partially supported. Differential association was not related to favorable definitions of sex work (Hypotheses 1 and 2).

Instead, the evidence suggested that how participants viewed themselves was related to how they defined sex work.

Differential association was not related to differential reinforcement (Hypotheses 3 and 6). The narratives suggested that participants' relationships outside of sex work exerted an independent influence on the perceived benefits and costs of sex work. That is, association, as indicated by intensity of ties to people outside of the sex work industry (regardless of the intensity of ties to people inside the industry), was related to differential reinforcement, such that participants with strong ties to people outside of the industry were more likely than other participants to describe the costs of sex work as exceeding its benefits, and participants with weak ties to people outside of the industry were more likely to describe the benefits of sex work as exceeding the costs. Furthermore, participants were more likely to experience net benefits if sex work did not interfere with relationships and priorities outside of sex work than if it did.

Differential association was related to differential emotional reinforcement as expected (Hypothesis 4). However, the evidence also indicated that relationships with people in the sex work industry, especially consumers, and sex itself were important in determining whether sex work was described as providing differential emotional reinforcement.

Differential association was not related to emotional labor costs (Hypothesis 5). The narratives indicated that whether emotional labor is experienced to be costly is determined by whether it affects a sex worker's other relationships, such as with a

romantic partner, or it forces the sex worker to act outside her comfort zone to preserve the business relationship.

Support was found for Hypotheses 7 that differential association would be related to sex worker identity commitment. The relation of differential association to commitment was as predicted. However, the evidence indicated that in addition to differential association, association with people in the sex work industry, regardless of association with people outside the sex work industry, was also related to identity commitment. The relation of differential association to sex worker identity prominence (Hypothesis 8) was partially as predicted, with participants with moderate intensity of ties and some others deviating from the expected pattern. In these cases, the intensity of particular types of association helped to explain the participants' sex worker identity prominence.

CHAPTER VII. How Social Learning and Identity Relate to Exit Intentions

This chapter reports findings about the relations of factors from social learning and identity theories to intentions to exit from sex work. With regard to differential association, it is hypothesized that intensity of ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people will be negatively associated with intentions to exit from sex work (Hypothesis 9), and exposure to consumers and sex workers will be negatively associated with intentions to exit from sex work (Hypothesis 10). This chapter also reports findings about the relation of definitions of sex work to exit intentions. The present study hypothesizes that participants with more favorable definitions of sex work will be less likely to intend to exit from sex work (Hypothesis 11). The chapter also reports findings about the relation of differential reinforcement to exit. The present study hypothesizes that participants will be less likely to intend to exit from sex work when they receive differential reinforcement for engaging in sex work (Hypothesis 12), differential emotional reinforcement (Hypothesis 13), and do not experience costs associated with emotional labor (Hypothesis 14). It also hypothesizes that participants with greater sex worker identity commitment (Hypothesis 15) or greater sex worker identity prominence (Hypothesis 16) will be less likely to intend to exit from sex work.

Relation of Differential Association to Exit Intentions

Support was found for Hypothesis 9; intensity of ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people was related to intentions to exit. As shown in Table 13, all participants with strong ties did not intend to exit from sex work. Roughly half of the participants ($n = 3$) with moderate ties intended to exit and the other half ($n = 2$) had no

intentions to exit. A majority of participants with weak ties intended to exit from sex work.

Eva (22 years old, black, 1 year of experience) exemplifies participants who had strong ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people and did not intend to exit from sex work. As reported in Chapter 4, Eva said that sex work was currently compatible with her life goals and did not interfere with her relationships outside of the industry. She said that she would be able to continue engaging in sex work while pursuing a bachelor's degree, and that "my regulars (i.e., regular consumers) will keep me grounded." Her disinterest in exiting arose in part from the validation she received through interactions with consumers. "When I started getting paid more, (sex work) became more important to me 'cause I saw my potential. I see that I can really get a (consumer) to come and pay me five hundred dollars." The money was not as important to her for purposes of consumption as it was for what it symbolized. She said, "When you can literally be down to your last twenty dollars, and you can text one man in your phone and say, 'I'm in your city', and he'll say 'I've got five (hundred dollars) for you', that's a real bitch" (i.e., a person with high status).

Barbie (21 years old, white, 8 years of experience) exemplifies participants who had moderate ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people and who did not intend to exit. Chapter 5 reported that Barbie enjoyed interacting with consumers and became "friends with them." She lived with sex workers and described her situation as "a cool, little family thing...we love each other." Although she had moderate ties with people outside of the industry, they knew about and condoned her involvement in sex

work. As reported in Chapter 4, Barbie said, “I don’t think about it too much, but I know one day, I will retire.” Barbie explained that because sex work is “fun,” she would remain involved in it “maybe as long as I could be sexual. I might not do it every day when I’m older, but I think for a pretty long time.” Furthermore, Barbie said, “I’ve been prostituting since I was thirteen. This is all I know how to do pretty much.” She aspired to obtain upward mobility within the industry, saying, “Where I started from (i.e., the streets) to where I’m at now, it’s been a big transition. So I know there’s higher-end working girls than me,” and she endeavored to “find that success, and always try to find something better.”

Vicky (24 years old, black, 3 years of experience) exemplifies participants with moderate ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people who intended to exit from sex work. Like Barbie, she aspired to “move up to a different level” within the industry. She said, “I’m always just looking to improve myself”, particularly by establishing a smaller and higher-paying base of consumers. However, as reported in Chapter 4, Vicky said, “I give myself a solid five years. I feel like by (age) thirty, I should have businesses open, and I should be able to move on.” She described sex work as a stage or phase in her life that helped her prepare for the future. She explained, “I chose to do this rather than complete four years of college because why would I go to school for something like opening a business, and then get out in four years, and have a hundred thousand dollars in debt?” Sex work enabled her to earn money that she would invest in a business outside of the industry, learn how to operate a business, and network with people who could advise her during preparations for opening the business.

In contrast to Eva, Nelly (22 years old, Middle-Eastern, 4 years of experience) had weak ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people, and she intended to exit from sex work. As reported in Chapter 4, Nelly said that sex work interfered with her relationships outside of the industry. Whereas Murphy and Venkatesh (2006) found that the illiquidity of social capital prevented sex workers from exiting, Nelly's case illustrates how the opposite can also occur. When people who are important to a sex worker will not be impressed by the sex worker's status within the industry, the sex worker will exit and find another way to make people proud. Unlike Eva, Nelly was content with the success she had already achieved as a sex worker. She said, "I worked this shit good and better than any girl. I have been a pretty good ho." She said that she reached a point in her life where "I don't want to be known as a ho." Nelly's strong ties to family motivated her to exit sex work: "I'm lonely and I miss my family." Furthermore, she recognized that "I'm fortunate to have family" who would give her emotional and practical support while she adjusted to life after sex work. She emphasized that, "I don't want to disappoint my family."

Although the expected pattern was found, several cases deviated from it. Seven participants had weak ties to people in the sex work industry relative to people outside the industry but nonetheless had no intentions to exit. Subsequent analyses revealed that the association between intensity of ties and intentions to exit was driven by variation in the sex workers' ties to people outside of the sex work industry. The number of participants in the sample with intentions to exit increased as the strength of ties to people outside of the industry increased. Only two participants with weak ties to people outside

of the industry intended to exit, but eight participants with strong ties to people outside of the industry intended to exit. This suggests that differential association relates to the exit intentions of sex workers because strong ties to people outside of the industry may encourage exit and weak ties to people outside of the sex work industry, especially when coupled with strong ties to people in the industry, facilitate involvement in sex work. Sex workers may be more likely to intend to exit when they have strong ties to people outside the industry than when they have weak such ties because sex work interferes with those relationships.

Molly (19 years old, Latina, 1 year of experience) exemplifies the participants with weak ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people who nevertheless had no intentions of exiting from sex work. As reported in Chapter 4, Molly's future intentions were undeveloped. She said, "it's all gonna happen at the right time...everything's gonna play out right." And she stated, "I'm gonna retire when I've gotten to the top." Molly viewed sex work as compatible with her goals, particularly reaching "the top" through financial accumulation. Her level of differential association was produced by moderate ties with consumers and sex workers being offset by moderate ties with family. She had a particularly strong tie with one other sex worker, her best friend, who had introduced her to sex work. They worked and travelled together. That relationship perhaps operated to retain her within the industry regardless of her ties to people outside the sex work industry.

Hypothesis 10 – that exposure to consumers and sex workers would be associated with intentions to exit – was not supported. As shown in Table 14, regardless of the level

of exposure, many participants had intentions to exit from sex work. Abigail (24 years old, mixed, 5 years of experience) exemplifies participants with high exposure and intentions to exit from sex work. As reported in Chapter 4, she intended to exit within a year because her priorities in life had changed. She entered into a romantic relationship and hoped to get married. Furthermore, she wanted to attend college and pursue an alternative career. Abigail had become “burned out” by her interactions with consumers and felt “guys expect too much” because other sex workers had become more accommodating. She was tired of dealing with “hagglers” and said, “It’s getting to the point where the money just isn’t worth the aggravation. And anyway, I want a family and a nice, normal life.”

Elle (25 years old, white, 5 years of experience) exemplifies participants with moderate exposure and intentions to exit. As reported in Chapter 4, Elle intended to exit within a year or two because she wanted to improve her relationship with her romantic partner. She said that working for another year would financially prepare her “to have a family,” and “start an actual adult life.” She was preparing for an alternative career in healthcare and currently had a job in that field. Elle was displeased with her involvement in sex work, saying, “I don't want to be doing this for the rest of my life. It sucks for me to have done it already.” She explained that “morally, I don't think I could ever be content doing this.” She said, “It's just not something I'm very proud of. I grew up Catholic.” Thus, her exposure to participants in the sex work industry had not instilled a favorable view of sex work within her. She added that sex work is “not something I could brag about. I don't think I could ever feel successful in it.” She explained that when she

entered the industry, “it was like, I’m so happy I have all this money.” Now, however, “I don’t care about brand names and all that crap. I just care about my rent being paid and my school loans being paid off.” More than a year has passed since the interview with Elle, and she has announced to the online community that she is engaged, pregnant, and has exited.

Lucy (23 years old, black, 4 years of experience) exemplifies participants with low exposure and intentions to exit from sex work. Lucy was distrustful of and avoided sex workers. In her interview she relayed four stories about physical fights, or near fights, that she had with sex workers before she stopped interacting with them. As reported in Chapter 4, Lucy wanted to improve her family relationships. She intended to exit when she finished training to be a nurse in approximately three years. She said that in the past, “I needed to get as much money as I can (from sex work). But now, I don’t feel that way.” She explained that, “I just matured a lot over the last two years. My kids just changed me and made me see things different. Just see the big picture, and see what people are really about.” Therefore, she did not intend to engage in sex work very often over the next three years while preparing for exit.

As the above examples illustrate, participants intended to exit if sex work interfered with their relationships and/or priorities outside of sex work. This theme emerged in the sample as a whole. Participants with no intentions of exiting described sex work as compatible with their priorities in life. In contrast, all but two participants who intended to exit said that sex work interfered with their relationships with people and/or priorities outside of the industry.

Relation of Definitions of Sex Work to Exit Intentions

Support was found for Hypothesis 11 that definitions of sex work would relate to exit intentions. As shown in Table 15, a majority of participants with very favorable definitions of sex work did not intend to exit from sex work, whereas a majority of the participants who had either unfavorable or very unfavorable definitions of sex work intended to exit from sex work. One exception to the linear pattern was among participants with favorable definitions of sex work; only one of the four people in that group did not intend to exit.

Natalie (20 years old, Asian, 2 years of experience) exemplifies participants with very favorable definitions of sex work and no intentions to exit from sex work. At twenty years old, she was younger than most participants in the sample, and she was a single mother. She viewed sex work as a vehicle for “being successful, having my own life, and being self-sufficient.” She did not “want to ever rely on somebody.” Furthermore, she described being “mature” and “self-sufficient” as her most important personality traits. Thus, sex work helped her validate her self-perception.

Kelly (25 years old, white, 5 years of experience) is the participant with favorable definitions of sex work and no intentions to exit from sex work. Chapter 5 reported that she did not define sex work as socializing, networking, or counseling. Rather, Kelly described sex work as consisting of screening and marketing. She said that sex work entails “answering phones, answering private messages, posting ads...I’m constantly taking pictures. Just that consumes a whole entire day...it’s weeding through people.” She did not define sex work as immoral. Kelly said that, “I don’t think about it as

immoral or degrading at all.” Her “many” arrests for sex work increased her defiance. She asked, “what’s the point of taking me to jail whenever I’m gonna get out six hours later and post another ad, just to piss you off?” As reported in Chapter 4, Kelly said that exiting now would “devastate me emotionally”, but “I’d like to be done by the time I’m thirty-five” because “it just seems too stressful” to compete against “twenty-five, eighteen-year old girls.” She worked hard to establish “my reputation and my client base,” and right now, “I couldn’t give it up.”

Sofia (22 years old, white, 1 year of experience) exemplifies participants who had unfavorable definitions of sex work and intended to exit. She described her job functions, in a positive manner, as including being sociable and counseling consumers. She was proud of “making them feel comfortable.” She explained, “I feel like the more you engage in a conversation with them, it makes them feel comfortable” by “talking to them about their day.” Furthermore, “I helped a lot of people learn to focus on their wives, and learn to actually make their wives happy, where the wives would actually want intercourse with them.” She said, “I didn’t really care if I lost them as a regular as long as they went back to their wife, and lived a loyal life.” However, as reported in Chapter 4, Sofia felt guilty about her involvement in sex work and wanted to reconnect with her parents and make them proud of her career achievements outside of sex work. The guilt that intensified Sofia’s intention to exit was fueled by her upbringing and her recent discovery of religion. “I always knew that this wasn’t morally right, but I had to do it for one reason, which was school.” Recently, “I found one church that really affected me,” and she became convinced that, “girls should not give up their body for money.”

Dana (23 years old, Latina, 5 years of experience) exemplifies participants who had very unfavorable definitions of sex work and intended to exit from sex work. She said that the thought of exit “makes me feel like I can start a new life, and just put that behind me, and just make some positive changes.” Chapter 4 reported that Dana intended to exit within one year because sex work was incompatible with her other goals in life: enrolling in college and finding a career in another industry. Furthermore, she wanted to exit to improve her relationships with her intimate partner and family members. She said “I want to have a better relationship (with family), but as soon as I retire from doing this, then it'll get better.” She felt guilty about engaging in sex work and “that's why I'm not in contact with them too much.” She worried that her window of opportunity for exiting and pursuing her alternate goals was closing and she would have regrets if she delayed much longer.

Several cases deviated from the expected pattern. Analysis of these cases revealed that other social learning factors explained their exit intentions. Among participants with favorable or very favorable definitions of sex work, the perception that the costs of sex work exceeded its benefits (e.g., Abigail and Susie) and that sex work interfered with relationships outside of the sex work industry (e.g., Wendy) were associated with exit intentions. Among the two participants with unfavorable definitions of sex work who did not intend to exit, the benefits of sex work exceeded its costs. For example, as Nina (24 years old, white, 4 years of experience) put it, sex work is sometimes “easy. You just show up, and they give you a large chunk of money, and mostly, you just hang out.” On a scale of one to ten, she rated her job satisfaction as ten. She perceived that “most people

don't have" the scheduling flexibility and workplace autonomy that she enjoys, adding, "I can wear whatever I want and do whatever I want to my hair and nails because nobody's telling me that I can't look a certain way." Being successful at sex work "made me feel more worthy."

Relation of Differential Reinforcement, Differential Emotional Reinforcement, and Costs of Emotional Labor to Exit Intentions

Support was found for Hypothesis 12 that differential reinforcement would be negatively associated with exit intentions. As shown in Table 16, participants who described the benefits of sex work as exceeding the costs were more likely to have no intention to exit from sex work than participants who described the costs of sex work as exceeding the benefits.

Helen (23 years old, white, 1 year of experience) exemplifies participants who described the benefits of sex work as exceeding the costs and did not intend to exit from sex work. As reported in Chapter 4, Helen said that sex work was compatible with her life goals and did not interfere with her relationships outside of the industry. Furthermore, the demands of sex work matched Helen's personal strengths and proclivities in that she described herself as a nurturing and caring person and sex work as a job that required the ability to care for consumers. Thus, Helen felt that she benefited more from sex work than any job she has ever had, particularly because her interactions with consumers were more enjoyable than her encounters with people in other settings. She even credited sex work with giving her mental stability. Because she had another job that provided adequate income, intrinsic satisfaction was her primary motivation for engaging in sex

work. She said, “It’s not about money to me.” At twenty-three years old, she expected to have opportunities to periodically engage in sex work whenever she wanted to until she elected to permanently stop.

Polly (38 years old, white, 3 years of experience) exemplifies participants who described the costs of sex work as exceeding the benefits and intended to exit from sex work. Polly described an inertia that made exit a challenge she must overcome. She could not identify alternative long-term goals for herself. She believed that no other job could provide the level of income she received through sex work and she was caught in a rut of making and spending large sums of money. Although Polly had strong ties to consumers and sex workers and high commitment to the sex worker identity, at thirty-eight years old, she anticipated that the benefit she received from sex work would soon steeply decline, as consumers opted to transact with younger sex workers. While she enjoyed her interactions with consumers because they made her feel “pretty”, Polly was frustrated by her inability to save her earnings. Furthermore, engaging in sex work was costly for Polly because it was difficult to hide her work from her six-year-old son, and to find a babysitter when she was working. Even if the benefits of engaging in sex work did not decline due to her age, Polly was concerned that it would soon be impossible to hide her work from her son, and that, as a result, she would be forced to exit.

Four cases did not fit the expected pattern. Subsequent analysis of these cases revealed their exit intentions were explained by whether sex work interfered with their priorities and/or relationships outside of sex work, regardless of whether sex work benefited them. For example, Chanel (27 years old, white, 4 years of experience)

described sex work as “fun” and enjoyed interacting with consumers. She minimized the costs of sex work by avoiding transactions with new consumers and hotel rooms.

However, Chanel’s priority was to attend college to get “a real career.” She explained “I’m trying to build my real life now. I learned to cook food. I’m way far behind in life if I don’t know how to cook. I have a lot of catching up to do. I can’t balance both. I’m an extreme person.” Her belief was that sex work had stunted her natural progression into adulthood and although it was rewarding, she felt internal pressure to transition from sex work to mainstream adult institutions and activities.

Eva was the one participant who described the costs of sex work as exceeding the benefits but did not intend to exit from sex work. Although she described net costs of sex work, sex work was compatible with her priorities and relationships outside of sex work, and her sex worker identity commitment was high. When describing sex work, she said, “This has made my goals more real. I feel like I can do a lot more for myself than I thought before because of the financial means.” She explained, “I had already went through community college on a part-time job, paying for it myself, and that was really hard ‘cause it took me away from interacting with everyone that I was around ‘cause I had to go work and all this other stuff. But now that I’m fantasy providing, I can now feel comfortable going forward and doing what I need to do just because of the amount of money I’m allowed to see.” She planned to enroll in a university and continue engaging in sex work because she could make her own schedule, and earn more money in fewer hours than she had in her previous part-time job, which would give her more time to interact with people outside of the sex work industry.

Support was found for Hypothesis 13 that differential emotional reinforcement would be negatively associated with exit intentions. As shown in Table 17, participants who experienced mostly positive emotions at work were more likely to have no intention to exit from sex work than participants who experienced mostly negative emotions at work.

Heidi exemplifies participants who experienced mostly negative emotions at work and intended to exit. Although she described occasionally feeling “happiness,” Heidi also felt the three basic negative emotions: “I get angry, sad,” and “scared.” She explained that she was always “on defense” because “that’s how you survive.” Meeting consumers made her “nervous” because, “There’s fucked up people everywhere. They can be cool one minute,” and then violent. Heidi said, “This shit is stressful. It’s stressful, surviving this way.”

Natalie exemplifies participants who experienced mostly positive emotions at work and did not intend to exit. She said, “It’s always a happy emotion.” She added that sometimes, she feels bored, “on a day that it’s slow or there’s not really much to do.” She likened that experience to any other workplace, saying “You’re at work, you’re at the office. You can’t leave. That’s how I take it.” On the whole, she said that she was usually, “in a good mood.”

Seven cases deviated from the expected pattern. An analysis of these cases revealed that other social learning factors explained their exit intentions. In particular, the four participants who intended to exit despite experiencing mostly positive emotions at work described the costs of sex work as exceeding the benefits. For example, Susie

experienced positive emotions in her interactions with consumers, but she disliked hiding sex work from family and friends and experienced the stigmatization of sex work as costly. Furthermore, she was dissatisfied with marketing tasks and rated her overall job satisfaction as six on a scale of one to ten. The three participants who did not intend to exit despite experiencing mostly negative emotions at work described the benefits of sex work as exceeding its costs. For example, Nina rated her job satisfaction as ten on a scale of one to ten. She enjoyed the scheduling flexibility and workplace autonomy of sex work. She liked, “the money and the freedom to do whatever I want” that sex work afforded. Being successful at sex work boosted her self-esteem.

Support was found for Hypothesis 14 that experiencing costs of emotional labor would be associated with exit intentions. As shown in Table 18, participants who reported experiencing costs produced by, and/or problems with performing, emotional labor were more likely to intend to exit from sex work than participants who reported experiencing no emotional labor costs.

Chloe (38 years old, white, 9 years of experience) exemplifies participants who accrued emotional labor costs and intended to exit from sex work. Chapter 5 reported that she used “method acting” to create a persona during transactions with consumers and that it was difficult to shed the persona when she was not working. As reported in Chapter 4, Chloe would be ready to exit in four years, when her daughter graduated from college. She explained “Now that she’s off on her own, my plan is to go to school, get that degree, and I can downsize.” Chloe wanted to train for a career in healthcare, which she expected to be more personally fulfilling than sex work. She also wanted to get married and

perceived that sex work prevented her from having a healthy romantic relationship, particularly due to the difficulty of shedding the role she created for interactions with consumers when interacting with men who were not consumers. Although she appreciated the substantial earnings that sex work generated, Chloe was willing to sacrifice luxury for the pursuit of her new priorities, such as a new career and marriage.

Crystal (24 years old, white, 6 years of experience) exemplifies participants who did not experience emotional labor costs and had no intention to exit from sex work. As reported in Chapter 4, Crystal perceived that consumer demand for her services would not decline before she achieved her financial objectives because she was still young. Although she planned to scale back her online advertising and transact primarily with regular consumers, Crystal felt that exit would be difficult for her because she was good at hustling and performing emotional labor. Consumers lavished upon her gifts, including cash advances. She explained that, “they want to buy my love.” For example, she said “I had somebody buy me a Seven Series BMW...he still compensates me for my time when I see him.” Furthermore, sex work did not interfere with Crystal’s goals or relationships outside of the industry. She said “I don’t want to get married.” She elaborated that, “I’m focused on building a future because I want to be independent enough to where if I do fall in love with somebody, and I leave them, or if we split up, I can take care of myself, and I do not ever have to depend on anybody.” She used her earnings from sex work to provide her many siblings with financial assistance, and she was comfortable knowing that her son would never worry about money.

Seven cases deviated from the expected pattern. Analysis of these cases revealed that the three participants who intended to exit although they did not experience costs of emotional labor either reported that sex work interfered with relationships with people outside of sex work (e.g., Wendy and Vicky) or described the other costs of sex work as exceeding its benefits (e.g., Polly). Polly believed that it would soon be impossible to hide her work from her son. At thirty-eight years old, she expected consumer demand for her services to soon decline. In other words, her intentions to exit were related to sex work interfering with her other priorities and a decline in the benefits of sex work, primarily in terms of income.

The four participants who did not intend to exit despite experiencing costs of emotional labor described the benefits of sex work as exceeding its costs. For example, Barbie enjoyed interacting with consumers, lived with sex workers, and had very favorable definitions of sex work. She said, “I don’t think about it too much, but I know one day, I will retire.” Because sex work is “fun,” she would remain involved in it “for a pretty long time.” She said that sex work “is all I know how to do pretty much,” and she wanted to obtain upward mobility within the industry.

Relation of Sex Worker Identity Commitment to Exit Intentions

Support was found for Hypothesis 15 that sex worker identity commitment would negatively relate to exit intentions. As shown in Table 19, a majority of participants with high sex worker identity commitment did not intend to exit from sex work, whereas a majority of participants with either moderate or low sex worker identity commitment intended to exit from sex work.

Jamie (24 years old, Middle-Eastern, 1 year of experience) exemplifies participants with high commitment and no intentions to exit from sex work. If she was ever prevented from advertising online, Jamie would “always have a plan B” to enable her to engage in sex work. She said that, “whatever you got to do, you got to do.” For instance, she said “you can always travel anywhere in the world and do this.”

Susie (36 years old, white, 5 years of experience) exemplifies participants with moderate sex worker identity commitment who intended to exit from sex work. Although she had been a sex worker for five years, Susie always thought of sex work as a part-time job. She would miss her relationships with consumers if forced to exit, and described the attention she receives from consumers as “addictive.” As reported in Chapter 4, she intended to exit because the burden of hiding sex work from her family had increased, and she wanted to get married. Furthermore, she wanted to have a successful career that was unobtainable through sex work.

Wendy exemplifies participants with low sex worker identity commitment who intended to exit from sex work. As reported earlier, Wendy wanted to exit to improve her relationships with friends and family and have more time for them. She said that it was difficult to hide sex work from them. Sex work enabled Wendy to quickly obtain spending money and partake in conspicuous consumption. Chapter 5 reported that Wendy felt prepared to lose her income from sex work if she were forced to exit, and there was nothing else about sex work that she would miss. She was saving her sex work income to open a business in a different industry, one in which she currently had a part-time job.

Wendy wanted to avoid a lengthy tenure in sex work. She said, “I don't see myself being in a hotel every freaking day of my life. It's fun, but it's boring.”

Three cases deviated from the expected pattern. Subsequent analyses of these cases revealed that their exit intentions were explained by whether they experienced differential reinforcement for engaging in sex work and whether sex work interfered with priorities outside of sex work. For example, Chloe had high commitment to the sex worker identity, but she intended to exit from sex work. Although exiting sex work would mean giving up her “whole life,” Chloe wanted to get married. Furthermore, she said “I also want to be able to honestly say that I have a legitimate job, that I’m a success in a traditional way in life.” Angie (26 years old, white, 4 years of experience) had low sex worker identity commitment but no intentions to exit from sex work. Angie did not intend to exit because she valued the high income from, but not much else about, sex work. “If I do anything besides what I’m doing, then I’m gonna go bigger...I make more money than a 9 to 5...I would never go down to less money. I would never go to a 9 to 5.”

Relation of Sex Worker Identity Prominence to Exit Intentions

Support was found for Hypothesis 16 that sex worker identity prominence would negatively relate to exit intentions. As shown in Table 20, participants who had high sex worker identity prominence were less likely to intend to exit from sex work than participants who had either moderate or low sex worker identity prominence.

Nina exemplifies participants who had high identity prominence and no intentions to exit from sex work. As reported in Chapter 4, sex work did not interfere with any of

her goals or relationships outside of the industry. At twenty-four years old, Nina believed that she had missed her window of opportunity to attend college, have an alternative career, and receive financial support from her wealthy parents. For her, sex work was more of a luxurious lifestyle than an occupation.

Tristen (26 years old, white, 4 years of experience) exemplifies participants who had moderate identity prominence and intended to exit from sex work. She said that her role as a sex worker had “equally the same” level of importance as her other roles. She elaborated, “I know when to differentiate. Today, I'm gonna be a daughter. Today, I'm gonna to be a sister. Just like on the way here from Arizona, I knew that I'm driving, and I have downtime. Yes, I'm going to work, but I still called my mom, and was like, ‘Hey, Mom. Love you. Just checking on you, blah, blah, blah.’ I know what is business, and what is family,” and “they're equally important to me.” Nonetheless, she intended to exit when she opened a business that would interfere with being a sex worker.

Courtney (20 years old, white, 1 year of experience) exemplifies participants who had low identity prominence and intended to exit from sex work. Unlike Nina, who was socially isolated and viewed sex work as more important to her than her relationships with people outside of the sex work industry, Courtney told everybody about her engagement in sex work and did not allow it to interfere with her relationships. She said, “I don't hide nothing. I'm very honest...my mom knows. Everybody knows, shoot.” As reported in Chapter 4, Courtney did not want to exit before reaching her financial goals. However, as opposed to Nina, Courtney had a concrete objective and savings strategy to

facilitate exit. She made daily deposits into her “piggy bank” to hit monthly savings targets, and intended to continue that process for five years.

Three cases deviated from the expected pattern. Analyses of these cases revealed that the two participants with low prominence and no intentions to exit described the benefits of sex work as exceeding the costs and reported that sex work did not interfere with their priorities or relationships outside of sex work. For example, Helen (23 years old, white, 1 year of experience) described sex work as highly beneficial, “the best job I’ve ever had.” The demands of sex work fit her nurturing and caring personality traits, and sex work did not interfere with her relationships outside of the industry or her life goals. However, stigmatization seemed to shape her sex worker identity prominence. When asked about the importance of her sex worker role compared to her other roles, Helen responded, “I want everyone to be able to just see it as a job and not really like, ‘Oh, she’s a slut’.” She said, “I put my other job at top priority.”

The one participant who had high prominence but intended to exit reported that sex work interfered with her priorities outside of sex work. As reported earlier, Polly described the costs of sex work as exceeding its benefits, believed that it would soon be impossible to hide her work from her son, and expected consumer demand for her services to soon decline.

Summary

This chapter explored factors related to intentions to exit from sex work. The evidence supported the existence of relations between exit intentions and all the hypothesized factors (Hypotheses 9 through 16), except exposure to consumers and sex

workers (Hypothesis 10). Participants were more likely to intend to exit when they had weak ties to people in the sex worker industry relative to people outside the industry, espoused unfavorable definitions of sex work, perceived that the costs of sex work exceed the benefits, perceived that the emotional costs of sex work exceed the benefits, experienced emotional labor costs, had lower sex worker identity commitment, and had lower sex work identity prominence. The narratives also revealed that whether sex work interfered with participants' priorities and social relationships outside the sex work industry was related to exit intentions. In addition, it appeared that the relation between differential association and exit intentions was driven by the intensity of ties to people outside the sex work industry rather than the intensity of ties to people in the sex work industry. Participants with weak ties to people in the sex work industry were as equally likely to have exit intentions as participants with strong ties to people in the industry.

CHAPTER VIII. Discussion

Using qualitative interviews and analysis, this study addressed the need for research on online sex workers, aiming to understand the factors that relate to sex workers' intention to exit from sex work. This chapter draws conclusions about the findings from this study. First, it discusses what has been learned about perceptions of exit among online sex workers. Second, it discusses what has been learned about factors that are associated with intentions to exit. Third, it discusses the extent to which Social Learning Theory and Identity Theory have succeeded in predicting the exit intentions of participants in this study, and the utility of drawing upon both theories. Finally, it presents limitations of the study and offers suggestions for future research.

Perceptions of Exit

Participants varied in how they interpreted the meaning of exit, whether they perceived exit to be desirable, perceived exit to be feasible, and intended to exit. Whether participants interpreted exit to mean ceasing to advertise sexual services (a swift exit) or ceasing to provide sexual services sometime after ceasing to advertise (a gradual exit), many of them expected exit to occur when they had what previous researchers have referred to as “positive turning points” (Månsson and Hedin 1999; Oselin 2010; Sanders 2007), such as entering a new occupation, getting married, becoming a parent, or opening their own business. In contrast to previous research on outdoor sex workers (Månsson and Hedin 1999; Oselin 2010; Sanders 2007), no participants in this sample of online sex workers identified negative or “traumatic” turning points that would prompt them to exit. Only six participants had ever been arrested for sex work, five of whom had no intentions

to exit. This difference between the present and prior findings is likely explained by the fact that, relative to outdoor sex workers, online sex workers have safer working conditions due to working indoors and utilizing extensive online consumer screening procedures.

Chapter 1 argued that online sex workers may have higher levels of job satisfaction than other sex workers because features of online sex work can increase their benefits and reduce their costs of engaging in sex work. The internet reduces sex work transaction costs by providing methods of screening consumers that lower the probability of encountering violent consumers or police officers. It increases revenue by enabling sex workers to advertise their services to a large market of potential consumers and to build favorable reputations through online consumer communications (Cunningham and Kendall 2011b). Only one-third of the participants in this study cited the risk of encountering police or violent consumers as a cost of sex work. This is consistent with previous research that found indoor sex workers have less exposure to police and violence than do outdoor sex workers (Weitzer 2005). On the other hand, most participants described dealing with rude consumers and harglers as a cost of sex work. That said, clearly even online sex work involves some risk of violence and involvement with law enforcement.

Most participants in the present study rated their job satisfaction as no less than eight on a scale of one to ten. Their levels of job satisfaction exceed levels throughout the U.S. population, as indicated by the 2012 General Social Survey (GSS). Whereas 16% of the GSS sample reported being “completely satisfied” with their job, 22% of participants

in the present study rated their satisfaction as nine or ten, with ten being “extremely happy”. In the GSS, 35% reported that they were “very satisfied” with their job and 44% of participants in the present study rated their satisfaction as eight. The proportion of dissatisfied participants in both samples were approximately equal. The claim here is not that the population of online sex workers is more satisfied with their jobs than the U.S. population. Rather, because this sample of online sex workers had relatively high levels of satisfaction, their satisfaction may exceed that of other types of sex workers, who have been found to have working environments that are relatively unsatisfactory (Dalla 2000; Månsson and Hedin 1999; Oselin 2010; Sanders 2007; Weitzer 2005), although no directly comparable data on job satisfaction exist for those groups.

The narratives of participants who interpreted exit to be a gradual process offer insights into perceptions of exit that previous research has not identified. Among these women, some intended to gradually cease transacting with strangers, some identified specific circumstances that would prompt them to exit after ceasing to transact with strangers, and others did not. These women shared a willingness to transact with regular consumers after they discontinued advertising for sex work. Participants explained that transactions with regulars are less costly than the transactions with strangers, which entail greater risk and more labor associated with advertising and communicating with and screening prospective consumers. Thus, the decision to continue transacting with “regulars” after ceasing to advertise may be a rational choice that maximizes the net benefits of engaging in sex work by minimizing its costs. Unlike women who intend to exit gradually, women who intend to exit swiftly, therefore, would be expected to have

particularly strong motivation to exit. Accordingly, all nine participants who interpreted exit to be swift perceived exit to be desirable.

As Oselin (2010) noted, turning point events are different than reasons for wanting to exit (i.e., viewing exit as desirable). Whereas previous researchers (Dalla 2000; Månsson and Hedin 1999; Oselin 2010; Sanders 2007) found that the desire to exit was invariably high among outdoor sex workers, only half of the participants in the present study perceived exit to be desirable. Participants who perceived exit to be undesirable often wanted to engage in sex work until their age made sex work too difficult for them. On the other hand, one reason for perceiving exit to be desirable was that participants viewed sex work as a short-term endeavor that would allow them to achieve specific financial objectives.

The most commonly cited reason for perceiving exit to be desirable was that sex work interfered with priorities and relationships outside of sex work. Some participants wanted to reconnect with their family members and make them proud of their career achievements. Others wanted to improve their relationships with romantic partners. All but two of the participants who intended to exit said that sex work interfered with relationships with people and priorities outside of the sex work industry, such as furthering their education and pursuing alternative careers. In contrast, all participants who had no intentions of exiting said that sex work was currently compatible with their goals or did not interfere with their goals. This finding supports claims based on macroeconomic data that the opportunity costs of engaging in sex work may be related to perceptions of exit from sex work (Moffat and Peters 2004; Rocha et al. 2010).

Slightly more than half of the participants perceived exit to be feasible for them, and the participants who perceived exit to be feasible tended to perceive it to be desirable also. The challenges associated with exit that participants described in the present study differed from those identified in previous research. For example, large numbers of outdoor sex workers in previous research (Dalla 2000; Murphy 2010; Oselin 2010; Sanders 2007) had drug or alcohol addictions, but sex workers in this sample reported no such conditions in their discussions of exit. According to the prior research, sex workers who were addicted to drugs would not exit, despite fearing they might lose their lives while working to support their addiction. When such an overwhelming barrier to exit is absent, challenges associated with exit have greater salience. Among online sex workers, therefore, the perceived desirability and feasibility of exit are shaped by challenges. For example, consistent with prior research (Murphy and Venkatesh 2006; Parsons et al. 2007; Williamson and Folaron 2003), participants in this sample described being “addicted” to the relatively easy income from sex work, the lifestyle that it affords, and the ego boost produced by interactions with complimentary consumers. These perceived challenges make exit seem infeasible and undesirable, and when these challenges are not present, participants are more likely to perceive exit to be feasible and desirable.

Participants who lacked alternative employment opportunities were more likely to perceive that exit was infeasible than were participants who had alternative work opportunities. Whereas participants who perceived exit to be feasible reported having success with saving money and planning for the future, some participants who perceived exit to be infeasible had difficulty with planning and setting goals. As in previous

research (Murphy and Venkatesh 2006; Sanders 2007; Williamson and Folaron 2003), participants in the present study identified financial challenges associated with exit, such as problems with spending and saving money.

In contrast to previous findings (Dalla 2000; Månsson and Hedin 1999; Oselin 2010; Sanders 2007), in the present study most participants who viewed exit as desirable intended to exit. This may be a function of varying levels of sex work income across settings (indoor versus outdoor), which is associated with varying levels of perceived exit feasibility. Sex workers generally earn more money as sex workers than they would in alternative occupations available to them, which means that exiting involves a reduction in income. Whereas low-range outdoor sex workers in much previous research could not survive on less income than they made as a sex worker (Rosen and Venkatesh 2008), this sample of mid-range sex workers could potentially live with less income if they adjusted their spending habits and/or developed a budget. For this reason, intentions to exit in the sample were associated with a shift in personal priorities that reduced the importance of maximizing income. Thus, it appears that structural factors and chemical addictions operate to retain low-range sex workers in the industry (Oselin 2010; Rosen and Venkatesh 2008), whereas personal factors, such as conspicuous consumption, operate more significantly in retaining mid-range sex workers in the industry. Mid-range sex workers who perceive exit to be desirable are more likely to intend to exit because they generally do not have personal factors retaining them and perceive exit to be feasible.

Factors Associated with Intentions to Exit

Previous research on exit from sex work (Dalla 2000; Månsson and Hedin 1999; Oselin 2010; Sanders 2007) focused on the process of exit and interviewed women who had either already exited or initiated the process of exit. Because the intentions to exit were invariable in those studies, factors associated with exit intentions could not be analyzed. The present study included a sample of current sex workers who varied in their intentions to exit. This sample, thus, allowed for an examination of factors that explain the variation in exit intentions. A limitation of this approach is that intentions to exit may not correspond with actual exiting behavior. However, an examination of study participants' online activity in the two years since the interview suggests that most have followed through with their intentions, at least in terms of ceasing to advertise. All but one of the participants who had no intentions of exiting still had active accounts on the sex work website, and so did the participants who intended to exit in three to five years. Just three of the twelve participants who intended to exit within two years have recently posted advertisements for sex work on the site. Most of the others deleted their accounts. Although it is possible the sex workers have not exited because they could return in the future, that possibility applies even when "former" sex workers are studied, as in the prior research.

Differential association. Differential association, operationalized as relative intensity of ties, was related to exit intentions in that participants who had weak ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people more often had intentions to exit than did participants who had moderate or strong ties to them. This pattern was driven by

variation in the intensity of ties with people outside the sex work industry in that participants who had strong ties to people outside of the sex work industry more often had intentions to exit than did participants who had weak or moderate such ties. This finding is consistent with previous research (Velarde 1975) that found social isolation from people outside the massage industry was associated with a lower likelihood of exit by massage industry sex workers. However, the present study identifies how strong ties to people outside the industry may encourage exit. Whereas Murphy and Venkatesh (2006) found that the illiquidity of social capital prevented sex workers from exiting, the present study found that when people who are important to a sex worker will not be impressed by the sex worker's status within the industry, the online sex worker will report intentions to exit so as to find another way to make those people proud. Furthermore, Murphy and Venkatesh (2006) explained how sex workers become disconnected from family and friends, and the present study found that online sex workers who perceive isolation to be costly often intend to exit.

With regard to the impact of social ties to members of the sex work industry, the present study found that ties to other sex workers were not as influential as found in prior research. Only when the sex workers had strong ties to people inside the sex work industry combined with weak ties to people outside the industry were they less likely to exit than participants with weak ties to consumers and sex workers. While this finding supported the hypothesis, informed by Social Learning Theory, that differential association would be related to exit intentions, it contradicts previous research on exit from outdoor sex work that found that terminating relationships with people inside the

sex work industry increased the likelihood of exit (Oselin 2009; Sanders 2007). This difference between the present and prior findings may be explained by the fact that online sex workers have different opportunity structures than outdoor sex workers that may negate their feelings of attachment to people in the sex work industry. For example, online sex workers may value their opportunity to enter another occupation or pursue further education more than they value their relationships with other sex workers. Outdoor sex workers generally perceive that they have few opportunities to enter another occupation or further their occupation, which has been found to be a primary barrier to exiting among outdoor sex workers (Dalla 2000; Månsson and Hedin 1999; Oselin 2010; Rosen and Venkatesh 2008; Sanders 2007).

In addition to documenting how exit intentions are related to the relative intensity of ties to people inside and outside of the sex work industry, the present study addressed the need for research on the relationships that online sex workers have with other sex workers. Previous research (Bernstein 2007b; Murphy and Venkatesh 2006; Parsons et al. 2007) found that when sex workers first began advertising their services on the internet, they were socially isolated from each other. In the present study, the sex workers reported various levels of contact with each other, and those who had little contact with sex workers reported that they did so by choice, rather than by an inability to make contact. With regard to the level of contact between sex workers, some participants had many friends who were sex workers and communicated with them on a daily basis. The website where they advertised their services provided a medium for both virtual social interaction and arranging face-to-face interaction. Others had only one or two close friends who were

sex workers. Still others had no relationships with other sex workers. Nearly all participants nonetheless participated in online exchanges, such as consumer reference verification, to promote safety. Any person's lack of ties, therefore, appeared not to be due to a lack of opportunity to connect with other sex workers, but rather, it was due to the fact that she did not seek relationships with other sex workers.

Although differential association was related to exit intentions, it was not related to definitions of sex work, differential reinforcement, or emotional labor costs. The failure of differential association to relate to these constructs may be due to the distribution of intensity of ties in the sample, with only two participants having strong ties to people inside the sex work industry relative to people outside the industry. In addition, the analysis indicated that the intensity of ties to people outside of the sex work industry independent of the intensity of ties to people inside the industry (i.e., association rather than differential association) mattered. Whereas previous research (Rosen and Venkatesh 2008) found that differential association was related to favorable definitions of sex work prior to entrance into the sex work industry, findings from the present study suggest that after entrance, sex workers' definitions of sex work depend on factors other than differential association.

The narratives suggested that how the participants defined sex work, as well as whether they perceived its benefits to exceed its costs and whether they experienced emotional labor costs, were determined by whether sex work met personal priorities and accommodated relationships outside the industry. Previous research also found that sex workers' perceptions of sex work were related to the compatibility of sex work with

priorities and relationships outside of sex work. For instance, outdoor sex workers who perceived that sex work conflicted with parenting were dissatisfied with sex work and motivated to exit (Månsson and Hedin 1999; Murphy and Venkatesh 2006; Oselin 2010). Sex workers who reported that sex work facilitated parenting perceived that the benefits of sex work exceeded its costs (Murphy and Venkatesh 2006; Rosen and Venkatesh 2008). Other sex workers perceived sex work to be rewarding if it was compatible with going to school, writing, or opening a business (Whelehan 2001).

The present study extends these findings from previous research by showing that for these online sex workers, compatibility of sex work with priorities and relationships outside of sex work was related to how participants defined sex work, whether they viewed the benefits of sex work as exceeding its costs, and whether they experienced it to involve emotional labor costs. Furthermore, it shows evidence of a wider variety of ways that sex work may interfere or be compatible with personal priorities and relationships outside of sex work. Participants in the present study discussed concerns about whether sex work enabled them to maintain relationships with many more people than just their children. Their differential reinforcement depended on whether sex work interfered with their relationships with romantic partners, parents, and friends. Some participants were either satisfied or dissatisfied with sex work because it did or did not contribute to furthering their education or opening a business. The most original finding was that the compatibility between self-descriptions (the qualities sex workers say they have) and job descriptions (the qualities sex workers say the job requires) mattered; it was related to differential reinforcement, definitions, emotional labor costs, and exit intentions.

Differential association, operationalized as relative intensity of ties, was positively related to differential emotional reinforcement, which negatively related to exit intentions. This finding is similar to Murphy and Venkatesh's finding that a few sex workers who described having "good bonds" (2006:142) with consumers reported experiencing positive emotions at work and being reluctant to exit. It highlights the value of considering how emotions factor into criminal behavior. At present, the criminology literature underemphasizes the role of emotions in guiding human behavior.

Criminological theorists (Agnew 1992; Braithwaite 1989) have described how anger and shame may motivate people to commit crimes, but criminologists have not considered how positive emotions may drive people to engage in crime, or how negative emotions may drive people to cease engaging in crime. This oversight in criminological theories is particularly glaring when considering the relevance of emotions in general theories of behavior. For instance, Collins (1981) argued that people seek to maximize emotional profits in their social interactions and that pursuit drives their selection of most activities. Rosenberg argued, "The search for human happiness is at bottom a striving to maximize positive and minimize negative affect" (1991: 125). Thus, the concept of differential emotional reinforcement developed here can be further explored in future research on online sex work and other criminal behavior.

Definitions of sex work. Participants who had unfavorable or very unfavorable definitions of sex work more frequently had intentions to exit than did participants who had favorable or very favorable definitions. This is consistent with previous research on outdoor sex workers that found favorable definitions of sex work facilitated entrance into

the sex work industry (Rosen and Venkatesh 2008), heightened levels of involvement in sex work (Luckenbill 1985), and discouraged exit from sex work (Sedyaningsih-Mamahit 1999). The present study is the first to examine the relation of definitions of sex work to exit intentions among U.S. sex workers or online sex workers.

The present study's finding that definitions of sex work were related to intentions to exit from sex work is consistent with Social Learning Theory as well as the other leading micro-level theories of crime (Control Theory: Hirschi 1969; Strain Theory: Merton 1938). The results suggest that future research should examine the possibility of a reciprocal relation between differential association and definitions of sex work. According to Social Learning Theory (Akers 2009), differential association influences and is influenced by differential reinforcement and levels of involvement in crime. Similarly, how sex workers define sex work may influence their levels of differential association.

Differential reinforcement. Differential reinforcement was related to exit intentions. Participants who perceived that the costs of sex work exceeded its benefits were more likely to report intentions to exit than were participants who perceived that the benefits exceeded the costs. Thus, the study provided support for Social Learning Theory. However, it also detailed the specific benefits and costs of sex work that related to exit. Because research on Social Learning Theory is typically quantitative and does not examine exit, it neither identifies what benefits and costs actually lead to crime nor desistance from it. Future research should examine whether the particular benefits and

costs described here are related to actual exit from sex work as well as intentions to exit from other types of crime.

Because prior research has not examined factors associated with exit from sex work, the present study is the first to present evidence of a relation between particular benefits and costs of sex work and intentions to exit. Costs of sex work that were associated with exit intentions included the stigma of sex work, hiding sex work from friends and family, the unpredictable revenue, and impediments to romantic relationships. Participants also identified other costs that have been reported in previous research (Silbert and Pines 1981; Weitzer 2005), such as the risk of arrest, contracting sexually transmitted diseases, and being physically harmed by consumers. However, participants who listed these costs were no more or less likely to report intentions to exit than participants who did not. These costs were also unrelated to the participants' overall assessments of net benefits and ratings of job satisfaction.

Some benefits of sex work that participants identified are the autonomy, convenience, flexibility, freedom, and independence that sex work offers. Previous research has identified these benefits of sex work (Bernstein 2007a; Bryan 1966; Murphy and Venkatesh 2006; Parsons et al. 2007). The present study found that participants who valued these features of sex work were more likely to report intentions to exit than were participants who did not value these benefits of sex work. This seemingly counterintuitive finding may be explained by Rosen and Venkatesh's (2008) argument that outdoor sex workers who value these benefits use sex work to satisfy immediate needs, but sex work does not offer them long-term stability and provides just enough

benefits to prevent them from exiting. The outdoor sex workers in Rosen and Venkatesh's (2008) study maximized their utility by engaging in sex work because they had limited alternative employment opportunities. In contrast, the participants in the present study who valued the autonomy, convenience, flexibility, and/or freedom of sex work nonetheless intended to exit if they could identify alternative sources of income. The few participants who valued those benefits but could not identify alternative sources of income had no intentions of exiting.

Like sex workers in previous research (Bryan 1966; Lindemann 2011; Murphy and Venkatesh 2006), some participants in the present study described themselves as therapists and gained self-esteem from the belief that sex work provides valuable services. However, there were no systematic patterns of association between exit intentions and self-esteem. Furthermore, self-esteem derived from sex work was not related to overall assessments of net benefit or sex worker identity prominence. However, future research should examine the possibility that changes in self-esteem over time may be related to intentions to exit from sex work.

Emotional labor costs. Participants in the present study who experienced costs of emotional labor were more likely to report exit intentions than those who did not experience such costs. Bernstein (2007a) found that online sex workers who felt proficient at performing emotional labor derived benefit from it, but she did not examine how that related to exit intentions. Other research has identified costs and benefits of performing emotional labor among a variety of sex workers (Cabezas 2009; Hoang 2010; Parreñas 2010; Rocha et al. 2010). The present study found that some sex workers

experienced some of the same costs identified by Hochschild (1983) in her research on corporate employees, such as difficulty getting out of character and difficulty managing negative emotions. Other participants in the present study described using acting techniques, including “method acting” - what Hochschild (1983) labeled deep acting - to both their detriment and benefit.

Whereas prior research on emotional labor (Hochschild 1983; Buchanan 2005) found that employees may endure emotional labor costs because they depend on the wages of corporations, findings from the present study indicate that even when contingent workers – in this case, online sex workers – directly negotiate exchanges with consumers, those workers may experience emotional labor costs and, without training, develop strategies for managing their emotions and the emotions of consumers. These findings add to a growing body of research that documents how sex work resembles legal labor, particularly within the customer service sector of the formal economy.

The present study’s focus on emotional labor contributes to the literatures on sex work and emotional labor. This study found that sex workers’ experience of emotional labor costs depended on their self-described personalities. Future research could explore whether a similar relation is found in other forms of care work. This study also documented a relation between emotional labor costs and exit intentions, a relation not previously explored in research.

Identity Theory and Intentions to Exit

This study demonstrated the utility of drawing insights from Identity Theory (Burke and Stets 2009) to develop Social Learning Theory’s concept of differential

reinforcement and its relation to disengagement from crime. Identity Theory suggests that people who experience negative emotions (a cost) while engaging in behaviors related to an identity may be more likely to exit that identity than people who experience positive emotions (a benefit) while engaging in behaviors related to an identity. The present study found that sex workers were less likely to report intentions to exit when they experienced differential emotional reinforcement (i.e., net positive emotions). However, a limitation of the present study is that it did not measure identity verification, which in this case, is the correspondence between how a sex worker describes herself as a sex worker (i.e., the sex worker identity standard) and how she perceives that other people (e.g., consumers and sex workers) describe her as sex worker (i.e., reflected appraisals). Identity verification is the source of positive and negative emotions within Identity Theory (Burke and Stets 2009). It is possible that positive and negative emotions arose from an alternative feature of interactions with consumers and sex workers rather than from identity verification.

Differential association, operationalized as relative intensity of ties, was positively related to sex worker identity commitment and prominence, each of which negatively related to exit intentions. Sex workers who were highly committed to their sex worker identity and reported that being a sex worker was important to them were likely to have stronger ties to people in the sex work industry relative to people outside the industry than sex workers who had low levels of sex worker identity commitment and prominence. Sex workers who had strong ties to consumers and sex workers spoke about how they would miss these relationships if they lost their sex worker identities, and sex

workers who had moderate or weak ties tended to not mention these relationships when discussing their commitment to the sex worker identity. Sex workers who had strong ties to people outside of the sex work industry generally described their friend, daughter, and girlfriend identities as being more important than their sex worker identities. Sex workers who had weak ties to people outside of the sex work industry were less likely to say that being a sex worker was unimportant to them.

These findings add insight to previous research that examined identity transformation as part of the process of exiting sex work. For example, Månsson and Hedin (1999) found that exit from sex work required women to break away from the sex worker role and create the ex-role. That identity change entailed finding personal fulfillment in a new role and social context. However, previous research did not explain how social relationships contributed to this identity change. Furthermore, researchers (Månsson and Hedin 1999; Dalla 2006; Oselin 2009, 2010; Sanders 2007) have focused on the transition from sex worker identity to ex-sex worker identity. The present study found that participants were most likely to have low commitment to the sex worker identity when they had weak ties to people inside the sex work industry, and they were most likely to have low prominence when they had strong ties to people outside the sex work industry. Low sex worker identity commitment and prominence were associated with having numerous alternative identities that they valued, such as sister, friend, daughter, girlfriend, mother, student, nurse, doctor, veterinarian, photographer, etc.

The results suggest that for explaining the online sex workers' exit intentions, the pathway of differential association to exit intentions through Social Learning Theory's

constructs of definitions and differential reinforcement (as traditionally measured) is not as effective as the pathway of differential association to exit intentions through Identity Theory's constructs of identity commitment and prominence. As argued in Chapter 2 and stipulated in Hypotheses 7, 8, 15, and 16, identity commitment and identity prominence may serve as mechanisms of effect by which differential association relates to desistance from crime. Social Learning Theorists boast about the ability of their constructs to empirically account for variation in levels of involvement in crime (Akers and Jensen 2009). In the present study, adding sex worker identity commitment and prominence to the model, along with differential reinforcement, helped to explain the variation in intentions to exit from sex work. More importantly, these constructs provide a deeper understanding of people's intentions to either continue engaging in crime or desist from it. In particular, that understanding comes from tracing the connection between exit intentions, identity commitment, and identity prominence back to the intensity of a person's network ties.

Social Learning Theory and Intentions to Exit

Social Learning Theory (Akers 2009) argues that whether people exit from crime depends on differential association, definitions of crime, and differential reinforcement for crime. The present study's findings provide evidence of both the utility and limits of Social Learning Theory for explaining intentions to exit from online sex work. Although Social Learning Theory argues that differential association can explain both exit and entrance, perhaps it is less useful for explaining exit. Findings from the present study suggest that the utility of Social Learning Theory for explaining exit from online sex

work is somewhat limited. Although differential association was not related to definitions of sex work, both constructs were related to exit intentions. Differential association was only related to other constructs when operationalized as intensity of ties. When operationalized as exposure to consumers and sex workers, it was not related to exit intentions, definitions of sex work, or differential reinforcement. Differential reinforcement was related to exit intentions.

Although these findings provide some support of the theory, there is evidence that the theory could be expanded to better explain online sex work exit intentions. As described earlier, the construct of differential reinforcement could be expanded. Another possibility is to examine goal incongruence. The most commonly cited reason for intending to exit in the sample was that sex work interfered with priorities and relationships outside of sex work. Thus, it is possible that the relation between social networks (i.e., the people with whom a sex worker associates) and exit is different for online sex workers than as depicted by Social Learning Theory. Perhaps exit is more a function of role conflict than strength of ties in this population. Participants in the present study attributed their levels of satisfaction with sex work to its compatibility with engaging in behaviors related to other identities, including role identities that are formed through relationships with people outside of the sex work industry. Furthermore, some forms of role conflict that participants described were unrelated to their social ties, such as the conflict between engaging in sex work and achieving an education or finding an alternative career. Thus, when engaging in sex work interferes with a person's

relationships or personal objectives, we might think of that as a specific type of goal incongruence that reduces differential reinforcement for crime and leads to desistance.

Social Learning Theory argues that people will engage in behaviors that are expected to generate positive net utility, but rewards are broadly defined as anything that people value (Akers and Sellers 2004). The theory lacks depth because “to understand deviance, even if it can be described with a cost-benefit formula, one must know what goes into the calculation” (Tittle 1995: 50). The present study addressed this limitation by identifying the particular benefits and costs that are related to sex workers’ intentions to exit from sex work. Social Learning Theory does not explain why people value some rewards more than other rewards, or why the values that a person assigns to different types of reinforcements might change over time. The present study found that how participants assessed the benefits and costs of sex work depended on their personal priorities and whether sex work was a good fit for them.

Differential association was not related to differential reinforcement because the benefits and costs of sex work that participants connected to their overall assessments of job satisfaction were not products of social interaction. Perhaps this finding is unique to sex work or forms of crime that people consider to be their primary occupations. Other crimes may be more likely to produce important benefits and costs through social interaction. However, it was clear that differential emotional reinforcement was related to both differential association and exit intentions. Thus, as mentioned earlier, this particular type of differential reinforcement should be explored in future research to determine whether it should be incorporated into theories of engagement in or exit from crime. That

said, a deeper understanding of why people experience positive and negative emotions when engaged in crime should be pursued. A complete theory of exit would identify the personal and situational variables that determine whether people derive differential reinforcement from crime.

While Social Learning Theory (Akers 2009) argues, and researchers have consistently found (Warr 2002), that association with criminals is related to involvement in crime, the present study's findings suggest that it may not be true for exit from online sex work. Because so little research tests Social Learning Theory in predicting exit from crime, it is unclear whether this finding is specific to online sex work. The finding may be explained by the fact that the sample is comprised of adults rather than juveniles. Social Learning Theory was originally developed to explain juvenile delinquency; many studies correlating differential association and involvement in crime were conducted with adolescents. On the other hand, that ties to people outside the sex work industry were related to exit intentions supports Social Learning Theory.

Towards a (New) Theory of Exit from Sex Work

Although the present study aimed to learn about sex workers' intentions to exit from sex work, the findings can inform the development and future testing of a theory of exit from the financially rewarding crime that is online sex work. Evidence from the present study suggests that the probability of exit from online sex work may be negatively related to favorable definitions of sex work, differential reinforcement, differential emotional reinforcement, sex worker identity commitment, and sex worker identity prominence. These variables, and the probability of exit, may depend on goal and

social relationship conflict. When engaging in sex work conflicts with the maintenance of social relationships and accomplishment of personal priorities, sex work is defined unfavorably, differential reinforcement is low, sex worker identity commitment and prominence are low, and the probability of exit is high. Furthermore, intrapersonal changes in these variables may heighten the probability of exit. When a person's priorities and social relationships change, intrapersonal conflict may arise that reduces differential reinforcement, favorable definitions, and sex worker identity commitment and prominence. Those changes may lead to exit.

Limitations of the Present Study

In addition to the limitations mentioned elsewhere in the discussion, several other limitations of the study should be considered when interpreting the results. First, regarding sampling, the findings may not generalize to other online sex workers. The sample may be biased in favor of sex workers with high levels of job satisfaction; less satisfied sex workers may have been less interested in talking about their work or participating in a study about sex work. Although participants in the present study post advertisements on numerous websites, the sample was recruited from a list of members at one website. Thus, the findings may not apply to sex workers on other websites. Other sites may provide more or less features which then translate to different experiences of sex work and thus, different levels of and reasons for intentions to exit. In addition, online sex workers who operate on the West Coast, and specifically in a large urban area in Southern California, may have different experiences than online sex workers who serve other regions of the U.S. and other countries. Finally, as previous research has

indicated (Bimbi 2007), the experiences of female sex workers may differ from male sex workers. Therefore, these findings may not apply to male online sex workers. Second, other limitations of the present study are related to design. Because the study focused on mid-range online sex workers, it did not include comparisons to low-range or outdoor sex workers. In addition, the study did not examine differences in the relations by participant demographics.

Suggestions for Future Research

In addition to the suggestions for future research mentioned elsewhere in the discussion, the following are opportunities for future research on sex work. The present qualitative study paved the way for quantitative analyses of online sex workers' exit intentions. Before this study was conducted, it would have been difficult to quantitatively operationalize the theoretical constructs, given that so little research had been done on online sex workers. The rich qualitative data generated here can be used to develop quantitative measures that can be used in survey research.

Longitudinal research, whether quantitative or qualitative, would also be useful. First, it would allow for an examination of the correspondence between intentions to exit and actual exit. Second, it may allow for more accurate specification of causal relations. It could test the direction of effects as well as the reciprocity of effects. For instance, it is possible that a reciprocal relation exists between sex worker identity commitment and intensity of ties to consumers and sex workers. Furthermore, Social Learning Theory has long argued that while homophily may help to explain initiation into criminal activities, positive reinforcement for engaging in those activities increases the levels of differential

association (Akers 2009). The possibility that differential reinforcement shapes differential association could be explored, particularly that positive emotions strengthen ties to consumers and sex workers. Finally, this design would also allow an assessment of the possibility that definitions may shape exposure to people in the sex work industry.

Future research should examine exit intentions in other groups of online sex workers, such as sex workers from other websites, sex workers from other regions of the U.S., and sex workers in different income scales. Furthermore, a study directly comparing online sex workers with outdoor sex workers could inform broader statements about exit from sex work. Finally, future research could analyze how sex workers' exit intentions vary by demographics, such as race, gender, and class.

Future research should test the theory of exit presented above. Additionally, researchers should examine the relation between identity verification, emotions experienced at work, and intentions to exit from sex work. Furthermore, the relation of goal incongruence to differential reinforcement, sex worker identity commitment and prominence, and exit from sex work should be further examined. Lastly, future research may find that exit intentions are related to changes in the levels of constructs identified in the present study. For instance, decreases in differential association, favorable definitions of sex work, and differential reinforcement, including self-esteem and positive emotions, may be related to intentions to exit from sex work because the intention to exit is a change in behavior.

V. References

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Table 1 Key Characteristics of Participants

Name*	Age	Tenure	Race/ethnicity	Family-of-origin socioeconomic status	Personality
Barbie	21	8	White (Norwegian and Romanian)	Lower class	Introvert
Abigail	24	5	Mixed (Italian, Spanish)	Lower class	Extrovert
Angie	26	4	White (Italian)	Lower class	Extrovert
Heidi	24	7	White (Greek, Dutch, Swedish, Turkish, Irish)	Lower class	Introvert
Lucy	23	4	Black	Lower class	Introvert
Rachel	27	8	White (German, Russian, Polish, Irish)	Lower class	Extrovert
Chanel	27	4	White	Lower class	Introvert
Courtney	20	1	White	Lower class	Extrovert
Tristen	26	4	White (Italian, Irish)	Lower class	Extrovert
Wendy	22	1	Latina (Central-American)	Middle class	Extrovert
Dana	23	5	Latina	Middle class	Introvert
Molly	19	1	Latina	Middle class	Extrovert
Vicky	24	3	Black	Middle class	Extrovert
Chloe	38	9	White	Middle class	Extrovert
Crystal	24	6	White (British)	Middle class	Extrovert
Kelly	25	5	White (French)	Middle class	Introvert
Eva	22	1	Black	Middle class	Extrovert
Doris	20	2	White (Bulgarian)	Middle class	Extrovert
Jamie	24	1	Middle-Eastern	Middle class	Extrovert
Elle	25	5	White (Russian, Japanese)	Middle class	Extrovert
Nelly	22	4	Middle-Eastern	Upper class	Extrovert
Nina	24	4	White	Upper class	Introvert
Natalie	20	2	Asian	Upper class	Extrovert
Helen	23	1	White (Ukrainian)	Upper class	Introvert
Sofia	22	1	Mixed (Cuban, Armenian, Lebanese)	Upper class	Extrovert
Susie	36	5	White (Eastern European)	Upper class	Introvert
Polly	38	3	White	Upper class	Extrovert

*Pseudonyms were used

Table 2 Participant Perceptions of Exit by Dimension

Participant (N = 27)	Meaning of exit	Desirability of exit	Intentions to exit	Feasibility of exit
Doris	Cease advertising	Desirable	Near-term	Feasible
Sofia	Cease advertising	Desirable	Near-term	Feasible
Elle	Cease advertising	Desirable	Near-term	Feasible
Courtney	Cease advertising	Desirable	Long-term	Feasible
Lucy	Cease advertising	Desirable	Long-term	Feasible
Jamie	Cease advertising	Desirable	No Intentions	Feasible
Molly	Cease advertising	Desirable	No Intentions	Feasible
Natalie	Cease advertising	Desirable	No Intentions	Feasible
Dana	Cease advertising	Desirable	Near-term	Infeasible
Wendy	Cease services	Desirable	Near-term	Feasible
Vicky	Cease services	Desirable	Long-term	Feasible
Heidi	Cease services	Desirable	Near-term	Infeasible
Susie	Cease services	Desirable	Near-term	Infeasible
Chloe	Cease services	Desirable	Long-term	Infeasible
Angie	Cease services	Neither	No Intentions	Feasible
Helen	Cease services	Neither	No Intentions	Feasible
Tristen	Cease services	Neither	Near-term	Feasible
Crystal	Cease services	Neither	No Intentions	Infeasible
Barbie	Cease services	Neither	No Intentions	Infeasible
Abigail	Cease services	Undesirable	Near-term	Feasible
Kelly	Cease services	Undesirable	No Intentions	Feasible
Nelly	Cease services	Undesirable	Near-term	Infeasible
Chanel	Cease services	Undesirable	Near-term	Infeasible
Polly	Cease services	Undesirable	Near-term	Infeasible
Eva	Cease services	Undesirable	No Intentions	Infeasible
Nina	Cease services	Undesirable	No Intentions	Infeasible
Rachel	Cease services	Undesirable	No Intentions	Infeasible

Table 3 Definitions of Sex Work by Intensity of Ties to Consumers and Sex Workers Relative to Other People

Intensity of Ties to Consumers and Sex Workers Relative to Other People			
Definitions of sex work	Strong (n = 2)	Moderate (n = 5)	Weak (n = 20)
Very favorable	2	3	7
Favorable	0	1	3
Unfavorable	0	0	5
Very unfavorable	0	1	5

Table 4 Definitions of Sex Work by Exposure to Consumers and Sex Workers

Definitions of sex work	Exposure to Consumers and Sex Workers		
	High (n = 8)	Moderate (n = 12)	Low (n = 7)
Very favorable	5	5	2
Favorable	1	3	0
Unfavorable	1	2	2
Very unfavorable	1	2	3

Table 5 Moral Definitions of Sex Work by Exposure to Consumers and Sex Workers

Moral definitions of Sex Work	Exposure to Consumers and Sex Workers		
	High (n = 8)	Moderate (n = 12)	Low (n = 7)
Not Immoral	6	8	2
Immoral	2	4	5

Table 6 Differential Reinforcement by Intensity of Ties to Consumers and Sex Workers Relative to Other People

Intensity of Ties to Consumers and Sex Workers Relative to Other People			
Differential Reinforcement	Strong (n = 2)	Moderate (n = 5)	Weak (n = 20)
Benefits exceed costs	1	4	8
Costs exceed benefits	1	1	12

Table 7 Differential Reinforcement by Intensity of Ties to People Outside of the Sex Work Industry

Differential Reinforcement	Intensity of Ties to People Outside of the Sex Work Industry		
	Strong (n = 11)	Moderate (n = 10)	Weak (n = 6)
Benefits exceed costs	3	6	4
Costs exceed benefits	8	4	2

Table 8 Emotional Reinforcement by Intensity of Ties to Consumers and Sex Workers Relative to Other People

Intensity of Ties to Consumers and Sex Workers Relative to Other People			
Emotional Reinforcement	Strong (n = 2)	Moderate (n = 5)	Weak (n = 20)
Mostly Positive	2	3	7
Mostly Negative	0	2	13

Table 9 Emotional Labor Costs by Intensity of Ties to Consumers and Sex Workers Relative to Other People

Intensity of Ties to Consumers and Sex Workers Relative to Other People			
Emotional Labor Costs	Strong (n = 2)	Moderate (n = 5)	Weak (n = 20)
No	1	2	7
Yes	1	3	13

Table 10 Differential Reinforcement by Exposure to Consumers and Sex Workers

	Exposure to Consumers and Sex Workers		
Differential Reinforcement	High (n = 8)	Moderate (n = 12)	Low (n = 7)
Benefits exceed costs	4	5	4
Costs exceed benefits	4	7	3

Table 11 Sex Worker Identity Commitment by Intensity of Ties to Consumers and Sex Workers Relative to Other People

Intensity of Ties to Consumers and Sex Workers Relative to Other People			
Sex Worker Identity Commitment	Strong (n = 2)	Moderate (n = 5)	Weak (n = 20)
High	2	2	6
Moderate	0	2	5
Low	0	1	9

Table 12 Sex Worker Identity Prominence by Intensity of Ties to Consumers and Sex Workers Relative to Other People

Intensity of Ties to Consumers and Sex Workers Relative to Other People			
Sex Worker Identity Prominence	Strong (n = 2)	Moderate (n = 5)	Weak (n = 20)
High	1	2	3
Moderate	1	1	8
Low	0	2	9

Table 13 Intentions to Exit by Intensity of Ties to Consumers and Sex Workers Relative to Other People

Intensity of Ties to Consumers and Sex Workers Relative to Other People			
Intentions to Exit	Strong (n = 2)	Moderate (n = 5)	Weak (n = 20)
No	2	2	7
Yes	0	3	13

Table 14 Intentions to Exit by Exposure to Consumers and Sex Workers

	Exposure to Consumers and Sex Workers		
Intentions to Exit	High (n = 8)	Moderate (n = 12)	Low (n = 7)
No	4	5	2
Yes	4	7	5

Table 15 Intentions to Exit by Definitions of Sex Work

	Definitions of Sex Work			
Intentions to Exit	Very Favorable (n = 12)	Favorable (n = 4)	Unfavorable (n = 5)	Very Unfavorable (n = 6)
No	8	1	2	0
Yes	4	3	3	6

Table 16 Intentions to Exit by Differential Reinforcement

Intentions to Exit	Differential Reinforcement	
	Benefits exceed costs (n = 13)	Costs exceed benefits (n = 14)
No	10	1
Yes	3	13

Table 17 Intentions to Exit by Differential Emotional Reinforcement

	Emotions	
Intentions to Exit	Mostly Positive (n=12)	Mostly Negative (n=15)
No	8	3
Yes	4	12

Table 18 Intentions to Exit by Costs Associated with Emotional Labor

	Costs Associated with Emotional Labor	
Intentions to Exit	No (n = 10)	Yes (n = 17)
No	7	4
Yes	3	13

Table 19 Intentions to Exit by Sex Worker Identity Commitment

	Sex Worker Identity Commitment		
Intentions to Exit	High (n = 10)	Moderate (n = 7)	Low (n = 10)
No	8	2	1
Yes	2	5	9

Table 20 Intentions to Exit by Sex Worker Identity Prominence

	Sex Worker Identity Prominence		
Intentions to Exit	High (n = 6)	Moderate (n = 10)	Low (n = 11)
No	5	4	2
Yes	1	6	9

Appendix A Interview Protocol

Let's start with some general questions about you.

- 1) **[Demographics]** As of today, how old are you?
- 2) **[Demographics]** What is your race and ethnicity?
- 3) **[Demographics]** What is (or was) your mom's occupation?
- 4) **[Demographics]** What is (or was) your dad's occupation?
- 5) **[Goal incongruence]** How would your friends describe you? Or, what are some of your personality traits?
 - a) What personality trait is most important to you?
 - b) Was that trait also your most important trait a year ago, or was your most important personality trait something different last year?
 - i) If it changed, then how? Why did it change?

Now let's talk about your work.

- 6) **[Definitions favorable to sex work]** How do you label the work that you do? What do you think of as your job title?
- 7) **[Definitions favorable to sex work]** What all does your work consist of? What are the various tasks that you do as part of your job?
 - a) **[Change in definitions favorable to sex work]** Has the type of service that you provide, or work that you do, changed over the past year?
 - i) If so, then how?
- 8) **[Differential reinforcement]** What do you like and dislike about being a [respondent's job title]?
 - a) **[Differential reinforcement]** On a scale of 1-10, how satisfied are you with your job right now?
 - b) **[Change in definitions favorable to sex work]** Has your satisfaction with your job changed over the past year? If so, why?
- 9) **[Definitions favorable to sex work]** Some people feel that being a [respondent's job title] is immoral. What do you think about it?
 - a) Do you feel that being a [respondent's job title] is moral or immoral?

Now let's talk about the level of your activity as a [respondent's job title].

- 10) **[Other]** How many hours a week on average do you work as a [respondent's job title]?

- 11) **[Other]** Compared to a year ago, do you now work more hours as a [respondent's job title], less hours as a [respondent's job title], or about the same amount of hours as a [respondent's job title]?
- 12) **[Differential association]** How many hours (on average) do you spend each week communicating with clients in person, online, and over the phone?
a) Do you spend more time now than you did a year ago, less time, or about the same amount of time talking to clients?
- 13) **[Differential association]** How many hours (on average) do you spend each week communicating with other [respondent's job title] in person, online, and over the phone?
a) Do you spend more time now than you did a year ago, less time, or about the same amount of time talking to other [respondent's job title]?
- 14) **[Differential association]** How many hours per week on average do you spend reading industry-related blogs?
a) Is this the same as a year ago (more, less, same)?

Now I will ask some questions about what being a [respondent's job title] means to you.

- 15) **[Definitions favorable to sex work]** What does it mean to be successful in your job? What are the signs of a successful (respondent's job title)?
a) Has your idea of success changed over the past year? If so, then how?
- 16) **[Differential reinforcement]** Do you feel that you are successful in your work? Have your feelings about your own success at being a [respondent's job title] changed over the past year? If so, then how?
a) **[Other]** Do you work more hard now, less hard now, or about the same as a year ago?
- 17) **[Differential reinforcement]** Do you get any feedback from clients about your work performance as a [respondent's job title]? If so, what do they say? How do they communicate it?
a) How important is that feedback to you?
b) Has the level of feedback that you get from clients changed in the past year? If so, how?
- 18) **[Differential reinforcement]** Do you get any feedback on your job performance from other [respondent's job title]? If so, what do they say? How do they communicate it?
a) How important is that feedback to you?
b) Has the level of feedback that you get from other [respondent's job title] changed in the past year? If so, how?

- 19) [**Goal incongruence**] Some words that students have used to describe their roles as students are competitive, sensitive, dependent, creative, and studious. Thinking of yourself as a [respondent's job title], what are some words that describe yourself in that role? Which are the most important?
- a) Have these changed over the past year?
 - i) If so, then how?
- 20) [**Sex Worker Identity Prominence**] Thinking about who you are as a person, how important is being a [respondent's job title] to you, relative to other aspects of who you are?
- a) [**Change in Identity Prominence**] Has this importance changed over the past year?
 - i) If so, how?

Now let's talk about the emotional aspects of your work – how you handle your own emotions and the emotions of the clients with whom you work.

- 21) [**Differential reinforcement**] What emotions do you experience while working? What strategies do you use to manage emotions at work?
- a) Do you strive to produce specific emotions – in you or your clients -- during sessions with clients?
 - i) How do you achieve that?
 - b) Do you ever pretend a client is somebody else? When, why, how? Can you give an example?
 - c) How much faking do you do? How do you feel about it (if reply is more than “none”)?
 - i) Do you take pride in being a faker? (if reply is more than “none”) If “none”, then why?
- 22) [**Differential reinforcement**] Have you ever felt deep (e.g., powerful, strong, meaningful, uncontrollable) emotion of some sort at work?
- a) If so, can you give me an example? What was that like?
- 23) [**Differential reinforcement**] Have you ever changed a situation at work to fit your feelings, or changed your feelings to fit the situation?
- a) If so, can you give me an example?

Now let's talk about your relationships with other [respondent's job title] and with clients.

- 24) [**Differential reinforcement**] Do you keep your personal life separate from your work?
- a) If so, how do you do that?
 - b) Do you try to influence your clients' views of their relationships with you?

- i) If so, what strategies do you use to influence your clients' views of their relationships with you? How well do they work?
- 25) **[Differential association]** What kinds of relationships do you have with your clients?
- a) How close are you with your clients?
 - b) How important are these relationships to you?
 - c) How much do you have in common with your clients?
 - d) Have your relationships with clients changed over the past year? If so, then how?
- 26) **[Differential reinforcement]** Do you feel accepted by your clients as a [respondent's job title]?
- a) Has this feeling changed in the past year?
 - i) If so, then how?
- 27) **[Differential association]** What kinds of relationships do you have with other [respondent's job title] at HX?
- a) How close are these relationships?
 - b) How important are these relationships to you?
 - c) How much do you have in common with these women?
 - d) Have the relationships changed over the past year? If so, how?
- 28) **[Differential reinforcement]** Do you feel accepted by other [respondent's job title]?
- a) Has this feeling changed in the past year?
 - i) If so, then how?
- 29) **[Other]** The internet has forums where girls can exchange information and advice. Have you participated in these exchanges, and if so, to what end?
- a) Can you give some examples of exchanges you've participated in?
 - b) Has your participation in these forums changed in the past year?
 - i) If so, then how?

Now let's talk about your relationships with people who are neither [respondent's job title] nor clients – the other people in your life.

- 30) **[Differential association]** Have your relationships with people who are *neither* [respondent's job title] *nor* clients changed over the past year? If so, then how?
- a) Are your relationships with these people more or less important to you now than they were a year ago?
 - b) Do you like them more or less now than you did before?
 - c) Are you closer to them now than you were a year ago?

Now let's talk about your plans for the future.

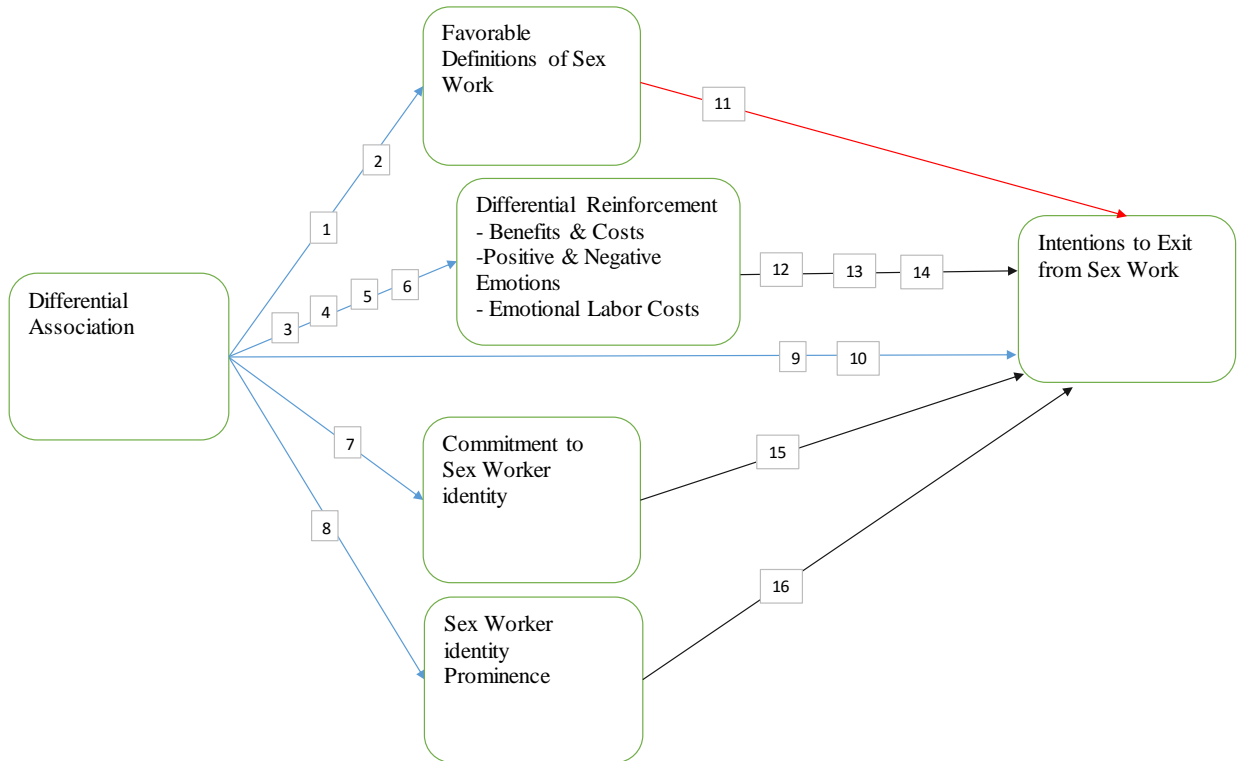
- 31) **[Goal incongruence]** What are your goals in life right now?
- a) How does your work help you to achieve or prevent you from achieving these goals?

- 32) **[Intentions to exit]** Do you have any other plans for the future? If so, what are they? And what steps, if any, are you taking to realize those plans?
- a) Do you ever plan to retire from being a [respondent's job title]?
 - i) If so, is there anything you want to accomplish as a [respondent's job title] before you retire?
 - ii) If not, is there anything you want to accomplish as a [respondent's job title]?
 - b) **[Commitment to the sex worker identity]** If you retired tomorrow, for whatever reason, what would that mean to you?
 - i) What would you be giving up? What would you gain?
 - c) **[Change in commitment to the sex worker identity]** If you had retired last year, what would that have meant to you at the time?
 - i) What would you have been giving up? What would you have been gaining?
 - d) **[Commitment to the sex worker identity]** Various factors motivate people to retire. If the websites where you advertise disappeared, how would that influence your perceptions of retirement or your plans for retirement?
 - e) **[Intentions to exit]** Are there any obstacles to retirement for you?
- 33) **[Intentions to exit]** What does retirement from being a [respondent's job title] mean to you?
- a) Do thoughts of retirement make you feel good or bad?
 - b) Do you think of retirement as something temporary or permanent?
 - c) How appealing to you is retirement either at all or in the next few years?
- 34) **[Intentions to exit]** Have your plans for or feelings about retirement changed in the past year?
- a) If so, then how?

We have covered all the topics I wished to cover.

- 35) Is there anything else you would like to share with me about your work, your relationships with clients and other [respondent's job title], your thoughts about retirement from [respondent's job title], or anything else?

Appendix B Theoretical Model



Aim 1 Hypotheses

1. Intensity of ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people will be positively associated with having favorable definitions of sex work.
2. Exposure to consumers and sex workers will be positively associated with having favorable definitions of sex work.
3. Intensity of ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people will be positively associated with differential reinforcement for engaging in sex work.
4. Intensity of ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people will be positively associated with differential emotional reinforcement.

5. Intensity of ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people will be negatively associated with emotional labor costs.
6. Exposure to consumers and sex workers will be positively associated with differential reinforcement for engaging in sex work.
7. Intensity of ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people will be positively associated with sex worker identity commitment.
8. Intensity of ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people will be positively associated with sex worker identity prominence.
9. Intensity of ties to consumers and sex workers relative to other people will be negatively associated with intentions to exit from sex work.
10. Exposure to consumers and sex workers will be negatively associated with intentions to exit from sex work.

Aim 2 Hypotheses

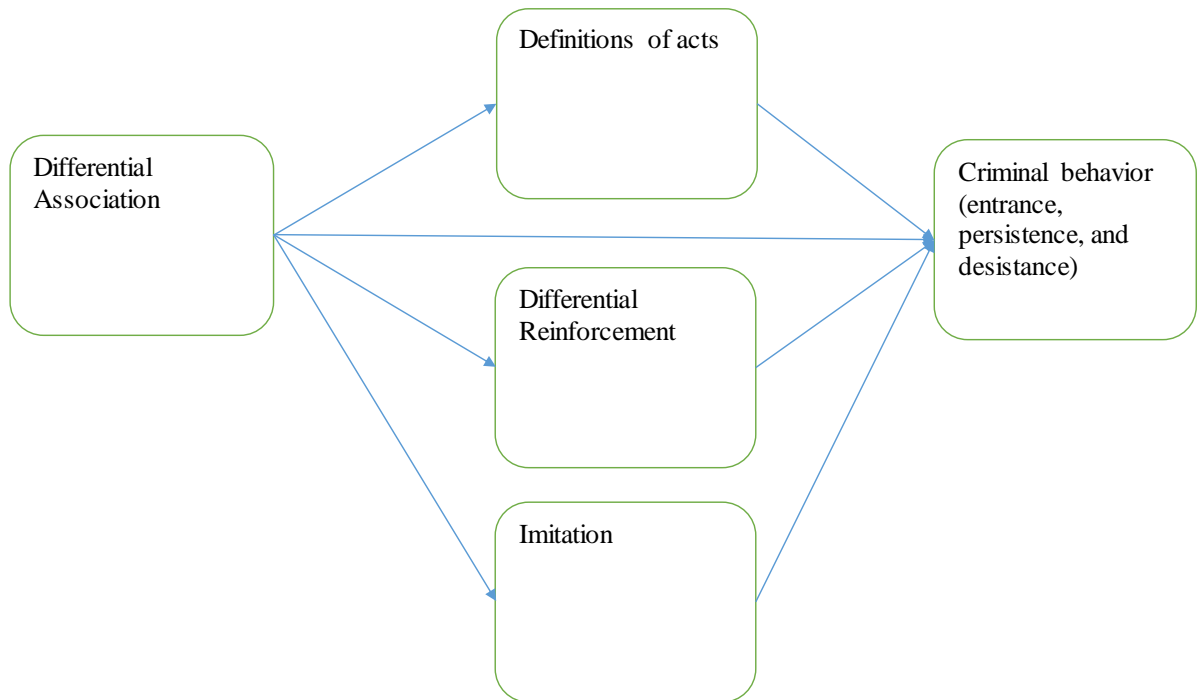
11. Favorable definitions of sex work will be negatively associated with intentions to exit from sex work.

Aim 3 Hypotheses

12. Differential reinforcement for engaging in sex work will be negatively associated with intentions to exit from sex work.
13. Differential emotional reinforcement will be negatively associated with intentions to exit from sex work.
14. Costs associated with emotional labor will be positively associated with intentions to exit from sex work.

15. Sex worker identity commitment will be negatively associated with intentions to exit from sex work.
16. Sex worker identity prominence will be negatively associated with intentions to exit from sex work.

Appendix C Social Learning Theory Model



Appendix D Identity Theory Model

