

12  
“How much are you, love?”

# The Customer in the Australian Sex Industry

*Roberta Perkins\**

Sex industry clients (known as “mugs” by many Australian sex workers) outnumber sex workers by as much as 20:1 to 100:1 (Bullough et al. 1977). One might expect from this that studies of the sex industry would focus on clients or, at least, include an address to clients. But this is not the case. Two decades ago Vern Bullough et al. (1977) compiled a comprehensive list of items published between 1539 and 1977 dealing with the sex industry. He found that the proportion of studies on males (as clients, pimps and sex workers) amounted to only 0.97% of some 5500 publications; the vast majority of publications looked at women working in the business. This situation has not changed greatly in recent times; studies continue to concentrate on the working lives, backgrounds and motives of female sex workers. Part of the reason for this is the public fascination and titillation with “bad girls”. It is also the case that studies of clients are more difficult to undertake than of sex workers (which are also not easy). The few available studies on clients have often supported a public profile of them as psychologically disturbed, sexually perverted or as men isolated from the social mainstream. This study, however, will demonstrate that, far from any of these, clients fit a broad cross-section of men who do not stand out from most other Australian males.

## **Organising a Client Study**

Most information on clients has come from studies on sex workers, in which respondents provide details on their patrons. In quantitative studies, we

may acquire a general profile of the client population by this means, but clearly it has its limitations and is subject to the respondents' presumptions, perceptions and biases. Other means of acquiring information on clients have been through psychiatric patients (Winick 1962: 2889f), observation of client behaviours (Stein 1974), extrapolating information from a broader study of males (Kinsey et al. 1948), and involving sex workers in the data collection process (Mugford 1989). The results are not truly representative of the client population because of their narrow focus to street prostitution (Stein 1974), call girls' clients (Mugford 1989), one brothel or specific groups of males (Bwayo 1991; Winick 1962).

In our recent quantitative investigation of clients (Lovejoy et al. 1995), we gave great consideration to acquiring as representative a sample as possible, given its many difficulties. After looking into various methodologies, we decided on phone interviews with clients who responded to an advertisement placed in a state-wide and several local newspapers. A sex worker was hired to receive the calls, since she would be best equipped to sieve out client fantasies and extrapolate factual information. We were confident the anonymity of telephone contact would be more likely to produce better quality data than, say, face-to-face interviewing. The worker was supplied with a questionnaire of standard questions to ask each caller. The number of clients who fully completed the questionnaire was 667 men. Since this proved to be one of the largest cross-sections

---

\* Roberta Perkins has been researching the sex industry in NSW for 20 years. For 10 of those years, she conducted a series of quintessential studies at UNSW on the industry, its working women and the clients that have added enormously to our knowledge on this elusive and often maligned occupation. She has published numerous articles and books on the subject, including *Being A Prostitute* (1985), *Working Girls* (1991) and *Sex Work and Sex Workers in Australia* (1994).

tional client samples ever gathered, we felt that the methodology chosen was an overwhelming success.

### Client Backgrounds

Although the entire client sample in our study was male, clients of sex workers are not always men. In one of our earlier studies, 12% of sex workers indicated that some of their clientele were women (Lovejoy et al. 1995). The sample's ages varied considerably from two who were under 18 years and six who were over 70. Table 1 indicates this wide variation.

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
Under 21 years	19	2.9
21-30 years	205	30.7
31-40 years	233	34.9
41-50 years	141	21.1
51-60 years	48	7.2
61-70 years	11	1.7
Over 70 years	6	0.9
Not reported	4	0.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>667</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 1: Age Groups of Clients (n=667)**

Apart from a broad representation of male age groups, our sample clustered around their 30s – less than 15% were under 26 years of age, half were between 26 and 40 and less than a third over 40. These may not be predominantly in their years of the prime male sexual activity period, but they do suggest a trend within a mature pre-middle aged period when sexual stagnation commences and is prompted by a search for adventurous variations.

Whilst nearly two-thirds of the sample had been married, only a little more than 40% were still married at the time of the interview. Table 2 indicates the duration of these marriages. Of those who were married at the time of the interview, we find that 57% had been married more than 10 years. This suggests the longer a man remains married to the same woman, the more his potential for visiting a sex worker increases. But, what of the 58% of the sample who were unmarried at the time of the interview? Since only 40% had never married, this would indicate that fewer single men visit sex workers than married men, which is the reverse of the situation found by the Kinsey (1948) team over half a century ago when only 16% of men visiting sex workers were married. Factors accounting for

this probably include the greater availability of sex to young men outside of both marriage and prostitution in the 1990s.

Duration	Frequency	Percentage
Under 6 months	1	0.2
6-12 months	2	0.3
1-3 years	22	3.3
4-7 years	31	4.6
8-10 years	57	8.6
11-15 years	49	7.4
16-20 years	45	6.7
Over 20 years	63	9.4
Not married when interviewed	386	57.9
Not reported	11	1.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>667</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 2: Duration of Marriages of Clients (n=667)**

The sample showed an above average educational achievement, with a quarter having acquired a tertiary degree, as seen in more detail in table 3. As a comparison the statistical figures for education show that 10% of Australian males had attained a tertiary degree, 23% had qualified trade certificates, 13% had obtained the highest secondary level and 35% had reached a stage of education below the highest secondary level in 1991 (ABS 1992).

It should follow from the educational findings that a considerable proportion of the sample would be employed in high salaried positions and white-collar occupations. Table 4 indicates that the clients worked in a large number of occupations, 44% of which may be defined as white-collar, such as administration, executive, clerical and owning a white collar business, while 48% were blue-collar occupations that included working in the service industry, in transport, in a factory, as a tradesperson, a labourer and owning a blue collar business, with a further 2% in undefined occupations and 6% either unemployed at the time or in retirement. The sample's residential areas in Sydney (in addition 5% lived in rural regions, interstate or overseas) are divided between 51.4% living in predominantly middle class suburbs and 43.1% living in predominantly working class suburbs. Taking both these and the occupational findings together we may conclude that the sample is divided approximately equally between the two major social classes in Australian society.

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage
Below School Certificate	14	2.1
School Certificate	166	24.9
Higher School Certificate	148	22.2
Trade Certificate	136	20.4
Diploma	20	3.0
Attending University	15	2.3
Tertiary Degree	165	24.7
Not reported	3	0.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>667</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3: Education Levels Attained by Clients (n=667)**

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage
Administrative	53	8.0
Executive	19	2.9
Clerical	109	16.3
Own White Collar		
Business	111	16.6
Service Industry	46	6.9
Trades	116	17.4
Transport	21	3.2
Factory	31	4.7
Labourer	66	9.9
Own Blue Collar		
Business	39	5.9
Armed Services	1	0.1
Other	13	1.9
Unemployed	18	2.7
Retired	22	3.3
Not recorded	2	0.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>667</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 4: Occupations of Clients (n=667)**

Whilst nearly half the sample indicated they followed a religious creed – as seen in table 5 – only 85 or 12.7% said that they regularly attended church services. These latter men may well be faced with an internal conflict between their beliefs and infidelity with their sex partners. The significance of the disproportionate ratio of Catholics is an interesting phenomenon for which I can offer no reasonable explanation.

Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Anglican Church	63	9.5
Catholic	210	31.5
Other Protestant	17	2.5
Other Christian	17	2.5
Muslim	9	1.4
Hinduism	2	0.3
Jewish	2	0.3
Other	1	0.1
No Religion	346	51.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>667</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 5: Religious Beliefs of Clients (n=667)**

In summary then we find that the respondents tend to be predominantly mature young males, most of whom are unmarried, with an above average education, employed approximately equally in white and blue colour occupations, and mostly non-religious, with two-thirds of the religious paradoxically of the Catholic faith. With a few minor variations the sample would not be too dissimilar to any randomly selected group of Australian males.

#### **Clients' Sexual Behaviour**

A common assumption about clients is that they are exceptionally sexually promiscuous. Our findings indicate that over the past six months less than half, or 289 (43.3%), of our sample had multiple sex partners (excluding sex workers who are not included here among sex partners). Almost the same number, 288 (43.2%), had sexual relations with only one partner, including 206 (30.6%) with only their wives and 82 (12.3%) with the same lover. Ninety (13.5%) of the men had had no sex partners at all in the previous six months. Table 6 indicates the extent of these relationships over the last six months.

Number	Frequency	Percentage
None	90	13.5
One	288	43.1
Two	115	17.2
Three	62	9.3
Four	39	5.9
Five	20	3.0
More than five	53	8.0
Total	667	100.0

**Table 6: Number of Non-Prostitute Partners of Clients (n=667)**

As we can see in table 7, the frequency of sexual activity among those with regular sex partners was not excessively high, suggesting that these men were not "over-sexed". Just under half, 142 (49.3%), of the 288 men with regular sex partners engaged in sexual activities with these partners more often than once a week.

Frequency	Frequency	Percentage
At least once a day	11	1.7
At least 3-4 times a week	77	11.5
At least twice a week	54	8.1
At least once a week	65	9.8
At least twice a month	30	4.5
At least once a month	27	4.1
Less frequently	19	2.8
Occasionally, hardly ever or never	5	0.7
N/A (multiple or no sex partners)	379	56.8
Total	667	100.0

**Table 7: Clients Sexual Frequency with Regular Sexual Partners**

Table 8 indicates that the men also did not engage in excessive sexual relations with sex workers. Less than half, 133 (48.2%), of the married men, and even less, 180 (46%), of the unmarried men visited sex workers more than every two months.

Frequency (at least)	Married Men	Unmarried Men	Total Men
Once a day	0	1 0.2%	1 0.2%
Twice a week	7 2.5%	12 3.0%	19 2.9%
Once a week	19 6.9%	28 7.2%	47 7.1%
Twice a month	37 13.4%	48 12.3%	85 12.7%
Once a month	70 25.5%	91 23.3%	161 24.1%
Every two months	28 10.1%	32 8.2%	60 9.0%
Every 3-4 months	43 15.6%	66 16.9%	109 16.3%
Every six months	29 10.5%	50 12.8%	79 11.8%
Once a year	28 10.1%	47 12.0%	75 11.2%
Less often	10 3.6%	14 3.6%	24 3.6%
Not reported	5 1.8%	2 0.5%	7 1.1%
Total	276 100.0%	391 100.0%	667 100.0%

**Table 8: Frequency of Client Visits to Sex Workers: Married Vs Unmarried**

Frequency (at least)	Churchgoers	Non-Churchgoers	Total Men
Once a day	0	1 0.2%	1 0.2%
Twice a week	4 4.7%	15 2.6%	19 2.9%
Once a week	3 3.5%	44 7.6%	47 7.1%
Twice a month	13 15.3%	72 12.4%	85 12.7%
Once a month	17 20.0%	144 24.7%	161 24.1%
Every two months	10 11.8%	50 8.6%	60 9.0%
Every 3-4 months	18 21.2%	91 15.6%	109 16.3%
Every six months	10 11.8%	69 11.8%	79 11.8%
Once a year	8 9.4%	67 11.5%	75 11.2%
Less often	2 2.3%	22 3.8%	24 3.6%
Not reported	0	7 1.2%	7 1.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>85 100.0%</b>	<b>582 100.0%</b>	<b>667 100.0%</b>

**Table 9: Frequency of Clients' Visits to Sex Workers: Married Vs Unmarried**

Table 9 compares the 85 church-going men with the non-churchgoers, showing surprisingly little variation between them. In summary, it can be said that the clients – married or unmarried, churchgoers or non-churchgoers – are not excessively sexually motivated towards sex with either their regular sex partners or sex workers.

Also surprising are the only slight differences between the clients' sexual behaviour with sex partners and sex workers, as seen in table 10. The only significant disparities are the much greater incidence of masturbation and the more imaginative sexual activities in interactions with sex workers (although all of these activities were undertaken by a minority of the sample). In the main, therefore, it appears that the clients sought sex workers not so much for different types of sexual activity as for different sexual partners.

Sexual Activity	With Sex Partners	With Sex Workers
Anal Sex	91 13.6%	103 15.4%
Vaginal Sex	574 86.1%	605 90.7%
Oral Sex	509 76.3%	582 87.3%
Hand Stimulation	25 3.7%	148 22.2%
Sadomasochism	4 0.6%	8 1.2%
Fantasy Sex	17 2.5%	50 7.5%

**Table 10: Sexual Activities of Clients: Sex Partners Vs Sex Workers**

It is in protection of sexual health that we notice considerable behavioural differences between the two areas of sexual activity. Table 11 indicates the frequency of condom use with the clients' sex partners. Less than half the clients used condoms in sexual activity with their non-prostitute partners and a third never used them. Obviously, a belief that engaging in sexual activity with sex partners is safe continues to persist among many clients.

Frequency	Frequency	Percentage
On every occasion	301	45.1
On most occasions	31	4.7
Only occasionally	19	2.8
Never	226	33.9
N/A (no sex partners)	90	13.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>667</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 11: Clients' Condom Use in Non-Prostitution Sex**

When we compare the kind of sexual activity with occasional or negligible condom use in table 12, a rather disturbing picture emerges in relation to the particularly hazardous activities of anal, vaginal and oral sex.

Sexual Activity	Occasional condom (n=19)	Never use condom (n=226)
Anal Sex	5 26.3%	32 14.2%
Vaginal Sex	17 89.5%	226 100.0%
Oral Sex	18 94.7%	182 80.5%
Hand Stimulation	2 10.5	12 5.3%
Sadomasochism	1 5.2%	3 1.3%
Fantasy Sex	2 10.5%	8 3.5%

**Table 12: Clients' Sexual Activities Vs Low or Negligible Condom Use**

Frequency	Oral Sex		Vaginal Sex		Anal Sex	
Never	49	7.4%	9	1.3%	1	0.1%
Occasionally	28	4.2%	3	0.4%	1	0.1%
Most of the time	27	4.0%	22	3.3%	8	1.3%
All of the time	499	74.8%	569	85.4%	84	12.6%
Not engaged in	64	9.6%	64	9.6%	573	85.9%
Total	667	100.0%	667	100.0%	667	100.0%

**Table 13: Clients' Sexual Activities in Prostitution Vs Condom Use**

When we examine the figures for high-risk sexual activity in prostitution, we notice that greater diligence was taken, as seen in table 13. This was due mainly to the insistence of the sex workers, who supplied the prophylaxis. Only 105 (15.9%) of the men said they carried condoms with them when they visited sex workers. When those clients who never or only occasionally used a prophylaxis were asked their reasons for resisting condoms, 81 (11.8%) claimed condoms caused them to lose feelings (physically and/or emotionally); 7 (1%) said that it wasn't necessary since they were "clean"; 6 (0.9%) gave various other reasons. In summary, we find clients were not highly sexually motivated above what might be expected of the average man. In prostitution sex, they tended to engage in safe sexual practices but half the sample did not do so in their other sexual relations.

#### Visiting Sex Workers

The motivations for the clients visiting sex workers were varied. We listed these against the 11 most

frequent reasons given by the sample. In tables 14 and 15, married clients are compared with unmarried clients, and churchgoers are compared with non-churchgoers. There are considerable differences in the motivations for visiting sex workers between the married and unmarried men. The former were much less likely to seek sex workers for company or because sex with them was less complicated, and more likely to do so because they enjoyed a variety of sexual partners or because their regular partners refused to provide them with sexual pleasure. More than a fifth of the married men claimed to have sex partners who did not provide sex. There is much less disparity between the churchgoers and non-churchgoers although a fifth of the churchgoers, compared to 12% of the non-churchgoers, said they sought sex workers because sex was unavailable to them outside prostitution. It is likely the churchgoers would have had more difficulty finding casual sex partners in the more morally rigid social environment they probably frequented.

Reason (multivariate responses)	Married Men (n=276)		Unmarried Men (n=391)		Total Men (n=667)	
Likes sex workers' company	43	15.6%	89	22.8%	134	20.1%
Sex with sex workers uncomplicated	72	26.1%	151	38.6%	225	33.7%
Sex workers "cleaner"	9	3.3%	6	1.5%	15	2.2%
Sexually aroused by sex workers	32	11.6%	31	7.9%	63	9.4%
Sex workers are "professionals"	34	12.3%	58	14.8%	92	13.8%
Can talk frankly with sex workers	6	2.2%	8	2.1%	14	2.1%
Only sex available	28	10.2%	59	15.1%	89	13.3%
Have a high sex urge	30	10.9%	45	11.5%	75	11.2%
Likes sex with variety of women/men	117	42.4%	89	22.8%	208	31.2%
Sex workers relieve stress	30	10.9%	46	11.8%	76	11.4%
Sex partner does not provide sex	57	20.7%	5	1.3%	62	9.3%
Other	5	1.8%	15	3.8%	20	3.0%

**Table 14: Clients Reasons for Visiting Sex Workers: Married Vs Unmarried Men**

Reason (multivariate responses)	Churchgoers (n=85)		Non-Churchgoers (n=582)		Total Men (n=667)	
Likes sex workers' company	16	18.8%	118	20.3%	134	20.1%
Sex with sex workers uncomplicated	26	30.6%	199	34.2%	225	33.7%
Sex workers "cleaner"	0		15	2.6%	15	2.2%
Sexually aroused by sex workers	9	10.6%	54	9.3%	63	9.4%
Sex workers are "professionals"	14	16.5%	78	13.4%	92	13.8%
Can talk frankly with sex workers	1	1.2%	13	2.2%	14	2.1%
Only sex available	17	20.0%	72	12.4%	89	13.3%
Have a high sex urge	7	8.2%	68	11.7%	75	11.2%
Likes sex with variety of women/men	27	31.8%	181	31.1%	208	31.2%
Sex workers relieve stress	8	9.4%	68	11.7%	76	11.4%
Sex partner does not provide sex	7	8.2%	55	9.5%	62	9.3%
Other	2	2.4%	18	3.1%	20	3.0%

**Table 15: Clients Reasons for Visiting Sex Workers: Churchgoers Vs Non-Churchgoers**

Over 1000 responses were made to the question on motivations for visiting sex workers. For less than 4% of the men, visiting sex workers was a singular experience, such as that seen in this comment from 37 year old "Adam": *I've only been once. I went to spite my girlfriend, but I wasn't satisfied.*

For nearly 10% of the men, sex workers or simply prostitution itself proved to be sexually exciting: *It's different to lovemaking. It's lust and it's great to have something new and different whenever you want it* (Bob, a client of many years); *I am excited by paying for it, and I do everything with men and women* (Don, 46 years old).

Over 10% of the men believed they were too highly sexed for one partner: *I need more sex than my girlfriend can give me* (Christopher, 22 years old).

Nearly a third of the sample looked for sexual variety, including 42% of the married men: *You can't eat spaghetti every night* (Nigel, 38 years old); *My wife is a flight attendant, so when she's away...(Uriah).*

Over a fifth of the married men said they visited sex workers because of their wives refusal or inability to provide them with sex. In some cases the reason given was medical, such as 33 year old Ron's wife whose medication for epilepsy desensitized her; or physical, like 28 year old Steve's wife, who found sex too painful; or psychological, such as 40 year old Quentin's wife, whose postnatal depression made sex repulsive to her, and 55 year old Tom's wife losing interest in sex after being diagnosed with cancer. More common were rejections of sex on purely emotional or moral grounds, such

as 32 years old Yves' girlfriend, who refused to have sex out of wedlock. Forty six year old Xiu's wife's refusal to have sex with him actually did him a favour: *I don't get sex from my wife, and I find not many women are as good at sex as prostitutes.*

Over a fifth of the men said they enjoyed being in the company of sex workers: *I get on better with prostitutes than with normal women* (Mal, 40 years old); *I can't be bothered with Australian women. They are too uptight about sex* (Lance, 65 years old); *I've been hurt and used by women. I will never have another relationship and will only visit prostitutes* (Kevin, 35 years old).

Some variations in responses can be found when comparing the men with the different levels of their educational attainment in table 16. With one or two exceptions, there is little variation between the men with different educational levels. One exception is a considerably higher proportion of men who attained a Higher School Certificate who said they liked sex with a variety of women. The reason for this correlation is uncertain. A second exception is a moderately higher proportion of men with tertiary degrees who sought sex workers for their professionalism. This may suggest that tertiary-trained men are more likely to appreciate the professional manner of others in their respective occupations. As professionals themselves, it may not be a surprise to find a higher proportion of tertiary-trained men visiting sex workers for relief from stress.

Some 13% of the men said that sex workers were the only people with whom they had sexual relations, and this was often motivated by either a physical handicap, such as 62 years old Ivan who has

Reason (multivariate responses)	School Cert. (n=166)	High Sch Cert (n=148)	Trade Cert (n=136)	Tertiary Deg (n=165)
Likes sex workers' company	34 20.5%	30 20.3%	25 18.4%	33 20.0%
Sex w/ sex workers uncomplicated	51 30.7%	52 35.1%	44 32.4%	60 36.4%
Sex workers "cleaner"	6 3.6%	4 2.7%	4 2.9%	1 0.6%
Sexually aroused by sex workers	14 8.4%	19 12.8%	10 7.4%	17 10.3%
Sex workers are "professionals"	20 12.1%	19 12.8%	16 11.8%	29 17.6%
Can talk frankly with sex workers	3 1.8%	4 2.7%	2 1.5%	5 3.0%
Only sex available	27 16.3%	9 6.1%	27 19.8%	20 12.1%
Have a high sex urge	19 11.5%	12 8.1%	17 12.5%	19 11.5%
Likes sex w/ variety of women/men	42 25.3%	66 44.6%	40 29.4%	49 29.7%
Sex workers relieve stress	21 12.7%	10 6.8%	13 9.6%	25 15.1%
Sex partner does not provide sex	14 8.4%	16 10.8%	14 10.3%	13 7.9%
Other	6 3.6%	3 2.0%	4 2.9%	5 3.0%

**Table 16: Clients Reasons for Visiting Sex Workers X Education Levels**

been confined to a wheelchair for many years, or a lack of confidence and self-esteem: *I am fat and not good looking, so it is the only sex I get* (Graham, 40 years old); *I am very shy and most women I meet don't like sex* (Harry); *It fills an emptiness in my life* (57 years old Jim); *I'm lonely. I sometimes just pay to talk, but I also like the excitement and the sleaze* (Owen, 37 years old). For Peter, sex workers substituted for bereavement counselors: *My wife died 18 months ago. Workers have helped me through it with sex and someone to talk to*. For other men the motivation was a shared experience with someone they loved: *My wife and I like to visit private workers together for threesomes* (Ethan, 35 years old); *My lover is bisexual, so I like to watch her with a prostitute* (Fred).

For two men, visiting sex workers became an uncontrollable compulsion, like a drug habit: I have a problem. I'm addicted to paying for sex. I've tried to give it up but I can't. I have a beautiful wife and children and we can't afford it (Victor, 29 years old); I first went to a prostitute when I was 17 and have been going ever since. Now I'm in a long term relationship but I still can't stop going to prostitutes (Wally, 27 years old).

To gauge other relationships between the clients'

social categories and their choices for acquiring commercial sex needs, table 17 compares the men's social and socioeconomic classes, education and religiosity in regard to where they seek sex workers. It is often assumed that middle class men prefer the services of private sex workers and escorts, while working class men choose street and brothel workers. The findings do not bear this out but rather there is a consistency across class lines with respect to the men's choice of sex workers. There are, however,

some interesting figures here, none more so than the remarkably high ratio of churchgoing men favouring street workers, which is hardly the most discreet venue for seeking out sex workers. Street prostitution depends on spontaneity from passers-by for much of its business, which may well account for this phenomenon, given that a churchgoer may have to *consider* his moral obligation *before* planning a visit to a brothel or private worker

or receiving a visit from an escort, whereas this may not arise until *after* his spontaneous response to a worker standing on a street. Apart from this, the figures do indicate a slight preference for street prostitution among the working class, blue collar and lower educated men in the sample, but not significant enough to correlate with their social class.

***An important consideration in dealing with clients' relations with sex workers is violence***

Social Category (multivariate responses)	WORKPLACES IN PROSTITUTION							
	Streets		Brothels		Private Work		Escorts	
<b>RESIDENTIAL AREAS</b>								
Middle Class (n=343)	22	6.4%	124	36.2%	235	68.5%	12	3.5%
Working Class (n=288)	25	8.7%	123	42.7%	185	64.2%	16	5.5%
<b>OCCUPATION</b>								
White Collar (n=292)	11	3.8%	114	39.0%	201	68.8%	19	6.5%
Blue Collar (n=319)	28	8.8%	126	39.5%	208	65.2%	12	3.8%
<b>EDUCATION LEVELS</b>								
School Certificate (n=166)	14	8.4%	58	34.9%	104	62.7%	6	3.6%
Higher School Certificate (n=148)	9	6.1%	57	38.5%	103	69.6%	9	6.1%
Trade Certificate (n=136)	11	8.1%	60	44.1%	93	68.4%	2	1.5%
Tertiary Degree (n=165)	11	6.7%	72	43.6%	108	65.5%	14	8.5%
<b>CHURCHGOERS (n=85)</b>	11	13.0%	33	38.8%	53	62.4%	2	2.4%

**Table 17: Clients Social/Socioeconomic Classes X Prostitution Workplaces**

An important consideration in dealing with clients' relations with sex workers is violence. Many studies in the past have treated this as an essential aspect of prostitution, in view of the relatively high incidence of violence occurring within sex work (Barnard 1992; Hatty 1989; Perkins 1991:345). Only a few of the men in the sample admitted to assaulting a sex worker, but in each case blame was laid upon the woman: *She ripped me off, so I hit her* (Colin); *She had a bad attitude and when I complained she started hitting me, so I pushed and shoved her back. It was her fault* (Zeke, 30 years old); *She was a non-English speaking Asian who got very upset for no reason and started hitting me* (Alan); *She was a street worker, very drugged out, and became very violent. I had to defend myself...most prostitutes are violent, vicious, hard women on drugs* (Barry).

Incidents such as these sometimes end in a homicide. Most violence committed upon sex workers is spontaneous and develops from mutual misunderstanding that gets out of hand. The seat of the problem is often linked to the conflicting reasons for the client and the sex worker meeting in the first place, with one looking for a fragment of human comfort and the other involved for purely mercenary reasons. Compounded with the disrespect accorded to sex workers by society at large, the situation then is highly volatile right from the beginning.

### Conclusion

The findings from this study of a cross-section of men who visited sex workers strongly indicate that sex industry clients are not men significantly different from the rest of the male population. Our sam-

ple were men of all ages, of above average intelligence, but with a significant number at the lower educational level to suggest cross-sectional mixtures, as well as about equally divided between the major social classes, employed in a broad range of occupations, both married and unmarried in roughly equal proportions, a small number attending church regularly and few of them highly sexually motivated. The impression one gets is that the sample is representative of men in general and not dissimilar to the average "bloke" in the street. There is often friction between the needs of clients and sex workers which occasionally escalates into violence. The problem for most men is the role they assume in sex relations, which is the dominant, initiating partner. Women are expected to be compliant, passive and non-initiating, and have a part to play as the moralising bulwark against the supposed male's hot and uncontrollable passions. This means that if they fall pregnant outside of marriage or contract an STD from their partner they are held to blame for not doing their duty in controlling themselves, as well as their male lover. Thus, men grow to sexual manhood in a social climate which lets them off the hook and places the onus of guilt for failure and the responsibility for sexual health squarely on their partner's shoulders.

Men carry these attitudes with them in their search for sex among commercial sex workers, expecting female prostitutes to be compliant, passive, uncomplaining and non-initiating, though not moral stabilisers, which distinguishes them from other women, in the minds of the men, and signifies to them that they are "bad girls" (read "whores") with fewer rights than the little given to most

women. It comes as a shock to many men on their first visit to a sex worker to discover that rather than being compliant and passive, as expected of women in general, she is in command, telling them what they can and cannot do, how much they will have to pay for this or for that, and, above all, they must wear a condom. Such attitudes are deeply disturbing for many men, especially when they already possess a deep resentment for having to pay for what they think should be given freely on demand. It is probably not surprising then to find some of the men in the sample (45 or 6.7%) opposed to "legalising" prostitution. A few of the men were motivated enough to tell us why they felt this way: *The law should clean up the streets. (Prostitution) is a bad influence on young people (Daniel); I think it is wrong (Edward); Legalisation would take the fun out of it (Foster, 43 years old).*

To test their moral opinions even further, we asked the men whether they would ever marry a sex worker. The split was almost equal, with 51% replying in the negative and 3% failing to answer. While the notion of the prostitute as purely a sexual object obviously still prevails in a large number of men who visit them, the fact that 46% answered in the affirmative is an encouraging sign that attitudes are changing and that prostitution is becoming more broadly acceptable to society. Finally, we pushed the issue even further with a question to the married men on whether they felt they were cheating on their wives, and posed the same question to the unmarried men asking them to imagine they had a wife. Two-thirds of the sample replied that they either did, or would, feel like they were cheating. We finished by asking the men if they thought their wives (real or imagined) would understand why they visited sex workers. Only 10% thought they would. Obviously, we still have a long way to go to close the gap between sex workers, their clients, the men's sex partners and society in general. Sex workers' organisations have done more than their share in narrowing the gap, but finally closing it will probably depend on clients forming political organisations too, and especially upon the ordinary "bloke" in the street coming out of the closet and putting the over-sexed raincoated pervert to rest within the mists of mythology once and for all.

## References

Australian Bureau of Statistics. 1992. *Social Indicators*. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Services.

Barnard, M.A. 1992. 'Violence and Vulnerability: Conditions of Work for Street Working Prostitutes' *Sociology of Health and Illness*. 15(5).

Bullough V.L., Elcano, B., Deacon, M. and Bullough B. eds. 1977. *A Bibliography of Prostitution*. New York: Garland.

Bwayo, J.J., Mutere, A.N., Omari, M.A. and Kreiss, J.K..1991. 'Long Distance Truck Drivers – Knowledge and Attitudes Concerning STDs and Sexual Behaviour'. *East African Medical Journal* 68(9).

Freund, M., Lee, T.L.N., and Leonard, T.L. 1991. 'Sexual Behavior of Clients with Street Prostitutes in Camden NJ' *Journal of Sex Research* 28(4).

Hatty, S. 1989. 'Violence Against Prostitute Women: Social and Legal Dilemmas' *Australian Journal of Social Issues* 24(4).

Kinsey, A.C, W.C. Pomeroy and C.E. Martin. 1948. *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male*. Philadelphia: Saunders.

Lovejoy, F., R. Perkins, and M. Jacobsen. 1995. *Unsafe Sexual Practices in the Sexual Behaviours of Clients of Female and Male Sex Workers Report to Commonwealth AIDS Research Grants Committee*, UNSW, Sydney.

Mugford, S. 1989. 'The Invisible Majority in Prostitution: A Socio-Demographic Profile of Clients at a Brothel in an Australian City'. Paper Presented to *The Australian Sociological Association Conference*, La Trobe University, Melbourne, December.

Perkins, R. 1991. *Working Girls*. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology.

Stein, M.. 1974. *Lovers, Friends and Slaves: the Nine Male Sexual Types: Their Psycho-Sexual Transactions With Call Girls*. New York: Berkeley.

Winick, C. 1962. 'Prostitutes' Clients' Perceptions of the Prostitutes and Themselves'. *International Journal of Social Psychology*. 8(4).

Copyright of Social Alternatives is the property of Social Alternatives and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.