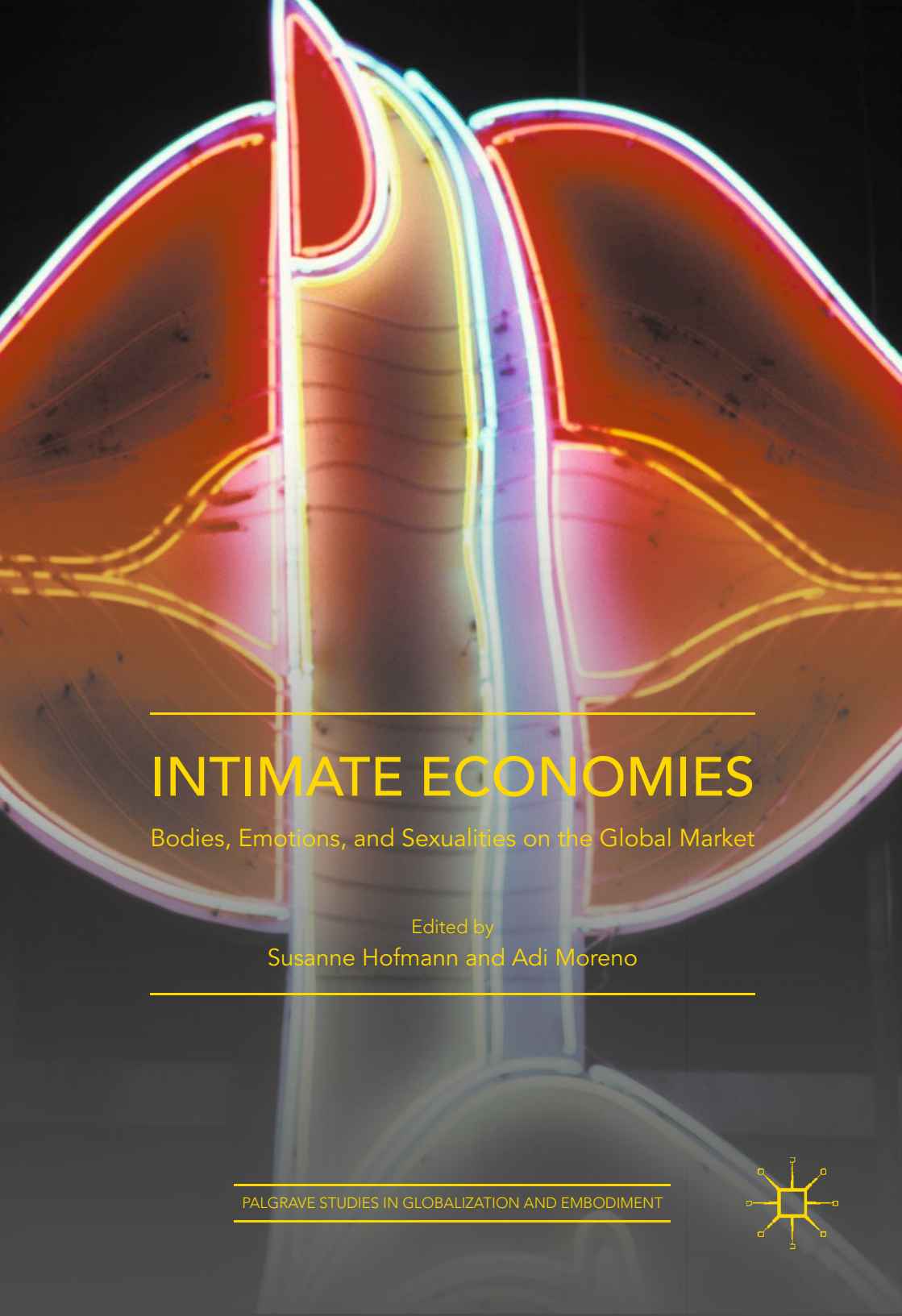

INTIMATE ECONOMIES

Bodies, Emotions, and Sexualities on the Global Market

Edited by

Susanne Hofmann and Adi Moreno

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Intimate Economies

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Global Intimate Economies: Discontents and Debates

Susanne Hofmann and Adi Moreno

This book is concerned with intimacy that has become part of market exchanges, or intimacy that in some way has become integrated into laboring processes to increase the value of labor. We understand intimacy in the most broad and basic manner as a form of connection. The Latin word *intimus* can be translated as innermost. Privacy, familiarity, sexuality, love and personal connection are notions that are generally understood as related to intimacy. Being intimate with somebody, for instance, involves "being close" or "closely connected" to somebody, which can be understood in physical, emotional and cognitive ways. An underlying premise that guides our understanding of intimacy, and subsequently the selection of the contributions and the structure of this book is that a "close connection" (intimacy) exists between a person and their own feelings, sexuality and body. Hereby, however, we intend to not determine or morally judge individuals' relationships to their own feelings, sexuality and body, or whether intimate practices or aspects of the self should or should not be part of market transactions.

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Fundamental for opponents of commercial intimacy is that by exchanging intimacy for money, the integrity between the body and the self becomes severed, which allegedly carries grave psychological consequences, and therefore damage the seller or provider of intimate services (Barry 1995; Jeffreys 1997). Accordingly, for such scholars, it is not just services that are sold in commercial intimate practices, such as prostitution, for instance, but sellers place their *selves* on the market, because the embodied labor cannot be stripped from the person who sells her sexuality (Pateman 1988). However, many providers of commercial intimate services strongly disagree with that view, as the following extract from an adult performer's blog demonstrates:

> One time I gave a guy a dance and he goes, "thank you for sharing yourself with me." The other girls thought it was sweet and I thought it was sick as fuck.—The wide-spread idea that we are selling, renting, sharing some integral part of ourselves is so gross to me … no one thinks that nannies are selling some vital part of themselves as they give your child (pseudo?) affectionate attention and wipe their asses (Red, adult performer).[1]

Core to our book is the recognition of the understandings and experiences of commercial intimacy by those involved in such relationships and processes. Commercial intimate practices have often been accompanied by discontent in both public debate and academic discourse. Although discussions of the commodification of sexuality (Van der Veen 2001; O'Connell Davidson 2002; Liechty 2005; Thu-Huong 2008), intimate labor (Wilson 2004; Boris and Salazar Parreñas 2010; Wolkowitz et al. 2013) and bodily substances (Franklin and Ragoné 1998; Scheper-Hughes and Wacquant 2003; Waldby 2006; Waldby and Cooper 2008; Kroløkke et al. 2012; Vora 2015) are certainly not a new field, our book aims to reopen this debate, and get to the bottom of the inherent discontent guided by the results of new empirical studies and the voices of individuals engaged in commercial intimate exchanges. As a response to this debate, our collection emphasizes the lived experiences of persons who take part in markets for intimate and embodied trade. We present different viewpoints and a variety of geographic locations in order to explore the multiplicity and diversity of experiences which have often been batched together under the monolithic concept of "bodies for sale."

To situate embodied commerce and intimate labor within the geographic, temporal and cultural context they operate within is crucial. We suggest that: (1). technologies, legal regulations and social contexts matter to the experiences of subjects involved in intimate exchanges; (2). in

different intimate markets, different notions of commodified bodies and their capacities are employed; and (3). these differences entail variegated significations regarding personal experience, material possibilities and outcomes for persons involved in the intimate and bodily trade. We refuse to encompass the complex and varied intimate economies that appear in this book with *one* overarching theorization, instead, in this introduction, we focus on discussing a range of theoretical concepts that recur in debates on intimate labor and bodily commerce. Most of those concepts, such as gifts, commodities, exploitation, harm, alienation, commodification, subjectivity, market, consent, choice or freedom have originated in philosophy, political science, economics, feminist writings or anthropology and traversed into other academic disciplines in the course of debates on human bodies and intimate capacities. We insist on the significance of these concepts as commonly applied to intimate labor and bodily commerce. However, we also assert that they urgently require a revision in dialogue with the lived experiences and reasoning of subjects involved in intimate exchanges.

Gifts and Commodities

Some of the existing literature on the commerce of intimacy have envisioned the private or domestic sphere as a bulwark that defies the harsh and impersonal world of market capitalism (for instance, Hochschild 1983, 2012). According to this approach, intimacy should be shared out of altruistic motives, and therefore be exchanged between persons or groups as a form of gift exchange, never as commodity. Many nostalgic approaches to understanding intimate relations that have influenced academic studies can be traced back to Marx' idealistic notion of the "social character" of familial labor in precapitalist peasant families (Marx 1978, 326). Intimacy is presumed a gift in common idealizations of precapitalist social relations, unmarked by inequality or instrumentality. However, gift exchanges do also involve complex and ambiguous processes and relationships that are not free from conflict. Describing the exchange of gifts through cycles of reciprocity, Bourdieu (1998), for instance, speaks of the dual truth of the gift. The concept of the dual truth relates to a gap between the subjective intentions and perception of each individual gift-giving event, and the objective reciprocal and power relationship embodied in gift-giving. Based on the inequality of power that constitutes the backdrop of many gift-giving processes, social actors "have an interest in 'disinterestedness'" (Bourdieu 1998, 93). Marcel Mauss (2002) focused rather on the "spirit"

of the gift that compels to reciprocation by possessing the person who receives it and thereby connecting her or him to the giver. In Mauss' interpretation, the spirit helped conceal the long-term reciprocal function of the gift and the embeddedness of gift-giving into existing power relations.

While gifts and commodities are often imagined as opposed to one another, a range of scholars have emphasized that empirically (in lived reality) the two cannot always be as neatly separated from each other as we might like (Zelizer 2005). In their article "Love as a fictitious commodity," the authors Swader et al. (2013) explore the meanings of women's gift-for-sex barters in contemporary Russia. The gift-for-sex exchanges that women pursue are contractual, and as such, they no longer are "pure gifts." However, the authors stress that the act of giving a gift, even a monetary one, by definition conveys the symbolic meaning of the desire to enter into a reciprocal relationship, rather than paying a salary, which stands for an economic transaction that equalizes labor or goods with a specific monetary value. Yet, the authors also emphasize that women's often specific gift-requests time and again "puncture this veil of assumed altruistic or independent intent" and easily appear as "bald-faced exchange," despite the fact that it is women's intention to subjectively disconnect their barter practices from market transactions or commodity exchanges. Hence, such gift-for-sex barters are "hybrids that embody both some degree of the emotional-romantic transfers made possible through the gift form and also the contractual nature of the barter" (Swader et al. 2013). A broad number of anthropological and sociological studies have described such sexual-affective economic exchanges in different parts of the globe, emphasizing that the realms of the altruistic-intimate (gift) and the economic-public (commodity) cannot neatly be separated (Cabezas 2004, 2009; Brennan 2004; Bernstein 2007; Piscitelli 2007, 2008, 2013; Nieto Olivar 2008; Cheng 2010).

Similar to transactions that involve intimate emotions and sexual practices, the commercial exchanges of human body parts are often articulated through gift symbolism, whether in the context of organ transplantation, medical testing, reproductive services or gamete supply. In particular, gamete provision and surrogacy are regulated as a form of "donation" or altruistic exchange in most countries of the Global North (Spar 2006; Kroløkke et al. 2012; Nahman 2013), while the sale of live organ donation is prohibited by international legislation (Scheper-Hughes 2003; Mor and Boas 2005). These transactions, which often nonetheless involve monetary endowments for body parts, tissues or reproductive capacities, are

defined as compensation or return for expenses to the persons providing their organs; and as payment for service or professional knowledge on the receiving end. These trades in the body exemplify therefore the multiple and dynamic ontologies of objects and subjects within intimate markets, as their meaning often alters within chains of production and consumption, according to the social values that are imbued within them (Thompson 2005; Nordqvist 2011; Nahman 2013). Participants in the body trade perform an intricate and nuanced "ontological choreography" (Thompson 2005) in order to ensure that the exchanges are framed according to existing moral norms and human dignity. In the process, human subjects, body parts, future persons and raw materials shift between different ontological statuses and subject positions, according to the desires of participants and the outcomes of the trade (ibid.).

Medical-legal mechanisms for sourcing, storing and distributing vital materials from healthy donors to persons in need date back to the development of blood banks during World War II (Waldby 2006; Thompson 2007). Titmuss (1970) linked the "gift ethics" of blood donations with the emergence of redistributive ethics of the welfare state, and with a form of national social cohesion and solidarity. The anonymity of the gift, according to Titmuss, engenders reciprocal ties not between the receiver and giver, but among members of the nation state who are all potential receivers and givers (ibid.). In the contemporary world, these mechanisms include the development of organ donation schemes for transplant purposes, gamete and embryo banking, and the sourcing preservation and growing of live tissues for the purposes of scientific research (Cooper and Waldby 2014; Parry 2015). In these sites, the gift ideology still carries on as significant discursive frame for the provision of embodied materials, as for instance in the provision of samples of human tissue for research purposes, which is expected to be based in voluntary donations rather than monetary payments (Waldby 2006; Thompson 2007; Gottweis et al. 2009). At the same time, over the last few decades, an advanced and ever growing market for body organs, reproductive cells and tissues and *in vivo* processes has developed into a global industry. These markets include the sale of gametes, surrogacy, live-donor organs and the market for drug testing and medical experimentation in healthy subjects. These industries are based upon global chains of production and consumption, often servicing the needs of persons in the Global North, and based on the vitality and capacities of bodies in the Global South (Ginsburg and Rapp 1995; Scheper-Hughes 2003; Kroløkke et al. 2012; Rudrappa 2015; Twine 2015).

Viviana Zelizer (2005) has drawn attention to the socially layered and complex subjective meanings that individuals assign to their economic activities. Her argument about the realms of the intimate and economic being interspersed rather than separated challenges classical "commodification" approaches (Radin 1987; Nussbaum 1995; Van der Veen 2001; Phillips 2013; Dodd 2014). Zelizer (2005) has labeled the social science perspective that deems the domestic or private sphere as a sanctuary that is presumed free from underlying economic interest or strategizing the "hostile world view." In this perspective, the world of the private and intimate becomes morally corrupted when activities or relationships are conflated with monetary value. Zelizer's work on intimacy and the market offers new and productive ways of understanding the social nature of the economy that do not fully negate the analytical value of the concept of commodification. Scholarship on the transnational circulation of affect and intimacies illustrates that relationships that are assumed to be based primarily on paid work for money often involve complex forms of intimacy (Brites 2007; Piscitelli 2007, 2008, 2013; Constable 2009; Vega 2009; Cheng 2010; Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2010; Boris and Parreñas 2010). Conversely, work that is assumed to be carried out in consequence of love or emotional ties can be linked to material interests and desires (Cole and Thomas 2009; Hunter 2009; Groes-Green 2014). Key insights from those studies can help us broaden our scholarly understandings and assumptions about the consumption and commodification of relationships that are often assumed to be naturally, or ideally, based on emotional connection, love or care, but that increasingly involve impersonal relations, complex commercial and increasingly bureaucratic mediating processes, material benefits and wages.

Discontents with Commercial Intimacy Spelled Out

So what is meant by commodification and what exactly do authors object to by appealing to the idea of commodification? Commodification refers to the social practice of treating a particular class of things as commodities, i.e. as properties that can be bought, sold or rented. To commodify something is to make something exchangeable for money. However, the term does have a moral sense beyond its descriptive meaning. In this moral sense of the word, it intends to "denote a specific kind of wrong" (Wilkinson 2003, 44). Scholars objecting to commercializing the body and the idea of commodification of the intimate tend to elaborate on the ethical point

that we ought not to permit these practices such as organ sale, prostitution and commercial surrogacy, because doing so will encourage people wrongfully to treat other people "as commodities." Commodification implicitly includes a type of objectification; converting something or someone into a good that can be traded (i.e. exchanged for a value). For Wilkinson (2003, 46) it is not "the commodifying attitude *per se* which is wrong, but the inappropriate application of it to entities, which aren't (proper) commodities (notably persons)," i.e. treating persons as if they were commodities. However, he reminds us that bodies and body parts are indeed physical objects. Hence, any ethical concerns that we have about the objectification of bodies, according to Wilkinson, cannot center on whether bodies are being treated as objects. Rather, therefore, our concerns must focus on whether bodies are treated as *mere* objects. Bodies are obviously more than mere objects insofar as they are intimately related to persons. To objectify the body can only mean to treat it as a *mere* object. This means treating it as if it were not intimately related to a person.

In addition to objectification (i.e. treating people as if they were objects), Margaret Radin (1996) objects to commensurability and fungibility, which constitute essential parts of her conceptualization of commodification. When a thing is commercialized, it is by definition assigned a monetary value. Radin (1996) contends that this forces, or at least encourages, us to view it as commensurable, both in relation to money itself and in relation to other things with the same monetary value. Commodities are fungibles, and to regard something as a commodity is to regard it as fungible. Hence, to commodify is to treat as fungible something which is not fungible and/or ought not to be viewed as such. Wilkinson (2003, 46) points out that this breaches the second Kantian principle, since treating persons as fungible fails properly to respect their dignity; it is to regard them as having mere "price." However, the fungibility critique arises in labor generally (McNally 2006). A nurse can be fungible, for instance, it does not matter which nurse puts a patch on a patient's arm. Hence, at work, people can be fungible, not only in intimate work, such as sex work, for instance.

Part of concerns around commercial uses of bodies is to do with a notion of exploitation. Stephen Wilkinson (2003) in his book *Bodies for Sale: Ethics and Exploitation in the Human Body Trade* thoroughly scrutinized the preoccupation with exploitation with regard to bodies becoming part of market transactions. Wilkinson distinguishes two kinds of exploitation, first, "wrongful use" exploitation, which other authors have

often captured with the notion of objectification or instrumentalization (Nussbaum 1995), in which the other is used merely as an instrument or tool for achieving someone else's goals. Wrongful use exploitation is using another person as a (mere) means. The second kind of exploitation Wilkinson discusses refers to "disparity of value." In disparity of value, exploitation the exploited is wronged because she or he is "unfairly used." Typically the unfairness consists of being rewarded too little compensation for work or efforts spent. The individual concerned has their vulnerability taken advantage of, which is why this kind of exploitation has also been called "advantage-exploitation" (Wood 1995, 8). For Wilkinson, however, there is no conceptual or logical conflict between valuing a person instrumentally and simultaneously as an "end." The consideration of treating persons as ends rather than means to an end dates back to the first Kantian principle: "do not treat people solely as means." While Wilkinson considers it possible to use persons in ways that are compatible with recognizing and respecting their intrinsic value, he contends that the problem is "not instrumentalization per se, but treating someone *primarily* or *merely* as an instrument" (Wilkinson 2003, 41). Therefore, the overall context of the relationship becomes fundamental. It is the overall context of the relationship, along with other structural features of the situation, which determines whether someone is appropriately respected as a person in the course of a commercial intimate transaction.

Globalized Intimate Labor a Commodity?

In Western philosophy, treating persons and bodies as things is to violate human freedom, and in doing so, to deprive people of a fundamental component of humanity (Hegel 1952; Kant 1979). This powerful claim, however, conflicts with the dominant institution of modern capitalist society, the labor market (McNally 2006). For Kant, wagelabor had serious implications for personhood; those making a living as "merely laborers," i.e. sellers of their labor, would be unqualified to be citizens (Kant 1991, 78). Selling one's labor, energy and skill for a wage he considered a threat to freedom and autonomy that are integral to personhood. By selling their labor, wagelaborers treat intrinsic parts of themselves as things, and this violates the very distinction between persons and things upon which human freedom rests for Kant.

In its founding charter, the International Labor Organization rejected the notion of labor as a commodity (Pocock et al. 2005). However, Pocock

et al. (2005, 459) assert that recent analysis of changes in the labor market internationally has led to a revived notion that "labour is returning to the status of a commodity." This shift, according to Pocock, is caused by an erosion of regulatory arrangements and practices that used to recognize and protect the embodied labor power in the person of a free citizen, one who exercises agency (including a voice, the change of workplace exit and resistance). Intimate labor, as we discuss in this volume, must be analyzed in the context of this contemporary backward shift toward treating labor as pure commodity. Correspondingly, workers lose control of their time, their ability to earn a living income, their capacity to reproduce or support dependents, their voice, the respect they are given at work and their ability to organize collectively.

As a result of the ever more widespread accessibility of global travel, in conjunction with persisting economic inequalities between the Global North and South, intimate economies have expanded throughout the globe, but especially in contact zones, in which actors from economically unequal backgrounds meet, such as international borders, tourism locations or biomedical laboratories (Ginsburg and Rapp 1995; Kempadoo 1999; Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002; Brennan 2004; Cabezas 2004; Collier and Ong 2005; Haraway 2008; Shah 2008; Hofmann 2010, 2013, 2014; Williams 2013; Simoni 2014). The bodies and capacities of intimate workers from the Global South become recolonized (Agathangelou 2004). However, this process of appropriation of people's bodies depends increasingly on individuals' personal capacities to adjust their emotions and concepts of self, body and intimacy to the rationalities of the market. Intimate workers make complex calculations, which include aspects such as financial gain, prospects for advancement and social mobility, stigma of the work, workplace satisfaction, control and self-determination at work among others. Experiences of subjects involved in intimate economies are often ambivalent, oscillating between personal empowerment and agency, as well as the required subjection to the demands of the current market regime.

The current global political economy is structured in a north–south division of service work (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002). Undesirable labor forms, such as intimate work and other forms of embodied labor are increasingly outsourced to workers from the Global South (Cabezas 2009). Globalization has sparked a sharp increase in workers from lower-income states who migrate into the metropolitan centers of the Global North, in order to boost their economic opportunities. In the

process of their movement, the intimate capacities and bodies of those workers become recolonized as cheap providers of body-work, sex and care (Agathangelou 2004). In this global exchange of intimate work, the labor of workers is utilized to socially produce other subjects and their lifestyles through generating experiences of intimacy or providing the corporeal substances that allow them to procreate. Our collection empirically demonstrates that the opportunities for intimate work available to socio-economically disadvantaged subjects often involve high levels of occupational risk, such as exposure to violence, extreme physical strain or health hazards, such as injuries or sexually transmitted diseases.

Selling aspects of "the self," such as personal attributes, intimacy, sexuality, emotions, affect, creative energy or bodily substances is increasingly common in contemporary capitalism. Workers continually renegotiate access to their bodies, and the authenticity of emotions and personal identities at work. The intimate economy has become a major economic niche for workers from the Global South whose bodies and affective qualities become the resources for the self-actualization of affluent elites. With this collection, we will advance current debates on the specificity of the commercial appropriation of bodies and intimate capacities, revisiting previous discussions on alienation, worker subjectivities and the effects of commodified bodies, emotions, affects and personal identities for the purpose of corporate profits.

Bodies as Commodities

Concerns regarding commodification of labor and personhood become more acute when the labor that is required lies within the realm of the intimate: sexuality, reproduction, care. Over the past few decades, the innermost parts of personhood have become part of commercial transactions, including: human genome sequences, organs from live-donors, gametes (and therefore future offspring) and reproductive capacities. This development of biomedical industries and markets in body parts raise several ethical and empirical questions: What are the implications of the commodification of biomaterial for the person providing it? What are the effects on personhood resulting from the commodification practices that involve body material and reproductive capacities? And what is the potential harm to humankind, as in the case of genome editing and the creation of "designer babies?"

Many feminist authors of the 1980s responded to the appearance of new medical markets for gestational services and reproductive material with concern (Franklin 2013). These authors criticized the potential of harnessing female reproductive capacities into a source of capital production, and hence the transformation of women's bodies into baby-making machines in the service of a capitalist-patriarchal industry (Katz-Rothman 1984; Corea 1985; Klein 1991; see also Franklin 2013). In books such as *Wombs for Rent* (Smith 1988) and *Test Tube Women* (Arditti et al. 1984) among others, the authors develop a theory that women's participation as sellers or as reproductive laborers inevitably transforms their bodies into mere commodities, separated from their subjectivity, and that they themselves become alienated from the fruits of their labor, which are in these scenarios the children who in themselves become commodities in the reproductive trade (Mies and Shiva 1993; Hochschild 2011b, 2012).

However, further empirical work of reproductive markets provides contradictory evidence as to the lived experiences of participation as sellers in the reproductive trade (Franklin 2013). Many studies describe the inherent inequality that underlies these markets, involving the movement of gametes alongside hierarchical axes of class, race and gender inequalities on a global scale (Ginsburg and Rapp 1995; Twine 2015; Vora 2015). These markets in reproductive organs often involve precarious working conditions, unfair payments and lack of compensation for risks and potential harm within these trades, and unfair pay, compared with the sums that are paid to the professionals conducting the trade (Nahman 2008; Kirby 2014; Pande 2014; Rudrappa 2015). At the same time, research also shows that when the reproductive service is conducted in a manner that respects the subjectivity and dignity of the reproductive laborer, when the commissioning parents show their gratitude and when the outcome of the process is the birth of a live child, these markets cannot only be perceived as a profitable endeavor, but also as an empowering and fulfilling experience by the laborers involved in it (Teman 2010).

Following Kirby (2014), we suggest that the debate often conflates two separate sets of concerns regarding markets in human bodies and embodied capabilities. The first concern stems from the conceptualization of human subjects as inalienable and of social relations (including love, sexuality, family building) as belonging outside the realm of the capitalist market. These arguments are often discredited by empirical work that demonstrates the commensurability of market *and* social relations. The second concern addresses the actual conditions of

participation in markets in bodies, which indeed often carry dire consequences for subjects carrying out embodied labor (Waldby 2002; Cooper and Waldby 2014; Kirby 2014). These articulations of markets in bodies as a new form of post-Fordist service economy are discussed in the next section.

The Value of Living Matter

The commodification of body parts, bodies and the emergence of new forms of embodied labor have brought about the emergence of a novel form of capital generation in late-liberal capitalism, a form that was termed by Waldby "biovalue" (Waldby 2002). Biovalue is a term which describes the value which is produced as a result of harnessing the vitality of the body or living tissues, altering them, manipulating them and directing their productivity (Waldby 2002; Waldby and Cooper 2008). Biovalue can consist of processes that occur *in vivo*, such as gestational surrogacy or phase I clinical medical trials, but it often occurs *in vitro*, separate from the personalized source of the tissue and often removed from the personalized, individualized traits. Since biovalue is mostly generated through the operation of medicine and medical clinics (for reproduction, research or clinical trials), Waldby and Cooper term this form of labor "clinical labor" (Waldby and Cooper 2008; Cooper and Waldby 2014).

Biomedical markets operate as part of a post-Fordist mode of production, relying on a cheap—mainly female—labor force, often located in the Global South (Waldby and Cooper 2008; Cooper and Waldby 2014). The reliance on a racialized, impoverished labor force enables the externalization of risk (monetary and physical) onto the bodies of the laborers while maintaining the main profit in the hands of professionals (Banerjee 2014; Rudrappa 2015). For instance, surrogacy contracts in India often involve lack of payment or very low pay in cases of miscarriage, and do not offer compensation to the surrogate for potential bodily harm (Sama 2012; Kirby 2014; Rudrappa 2015). Thus, externalizing the risk expands the profit margins of the surrogacy industry while maintaining the costs low for commissioning parents, at the expense of surrogates who may suffer financial losses and bodily harm.

The production of biovalue involves a certain "movement" between altruism and commerce, between gift, commodity and waste (Cooper and

Waldby 2014), and the same substance can change its ontology according to the location in the consumption or production networks. For instance, ova can enter the reproductive trade cycle as a donation, or as a precious commodity, and it can exit the chain of reproductive commerce as a live human being, in the case of successful fertilization and pregnancy, as a discarded raw material, as in the case of failed freezing, thawing or fertilization, or as a form of unused waste, as is the case with many over-crowded embryo repositories around the world. The ovum can also alter its aim and become the source material of medical research, as is the case of stem cell research. Throughout these movements, the meaning of "commodification" of the body alters as the body itself becomes molecular and disintegrated (Rose 2001).

Clinical labor often involves specific interventions in the female body "rather than the performance of tasks and an expenditure of labor power per se. This ambiguity is endemic to the new forms of biomedical and clinical labor, all of which require a direct, often highly experimental, involvement of the body's biology in the creation of surplus value" (Waldby and Cooper 2008, 65). This positions the laborer herself and the labor performed in a questionable position—being part seller, part laborer, part commodity, devoid of labor protections and regulatory frameworks and stigmatized for participating in bodily trade (Ikemoto 2009; Pande 2009b; Parry 2015). It is therefore suggested that a counter-measure should include addressing laborers' participation in biomedical markets strictly as a form of labor—and therefore demanding the recognition of their rights to their own body material and bodily integrity (Dickenson 2007; Waldby and Cooper 2008; Pande 2011, 2014). It is important to note in this respect that clinical laborers often perform complex tasks with and about their bodies, including the acquisition of particular scientific knowledge, as well as intricate intimate labor in order to match the criteria of the biomedical industry. For instance, phase I test subjects need to maintain daily routines of medicine intake and reporting of notable effects; egg vendors receive hormonal treatments prior to the ova extraction, and are also expected to provide detailed medical histories; and gestational surrogates care for their pregnant body and the fetus during surrogacy pregnancy, as well as maintain their emotional presentation toward the commissioning parents and clinical staff. In this respect, clinical labor corresponds with other lines of emotional or affective, intimate labor in the growing global service economy.

Intimate Labor and Alienation

What for many scholars makes intimate work more problematic than other laboring activities is not just the *use* of the human body, but the *sexual* use of the body and of women's bodies in particular. Sexuality is regarded as one of the most intimate aspects of the self. It is considered integral to the self and can therefore not be separated from it without harm. Subsequently, for some scholars, a prostitute who sells her sexuality is also selling her "self" (Pateman 1988). The buying and selling of sexuality for the client's use is thought to transform the body into a mere vessel or object. Anti-commodification scholars assert that in the course of the intimate market exchange, the body becomes alienated, as it is used as a "thing" for someone else (Van der Veen 2001). The process of emotional distancing, disengagement and segmentation that is integral to professional sex workers' work practices is considered as "destructive of women's humanity" by radical feminists (Barry 1995). Notions of "detrimental use" of others, harm and alienation play a decisive role in the theorizing of anti-commodification scholars with regard to intimate economies. In her seminal book *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*, Arlie R. Hochschild (1983) elaborates on the "cost" of emotional labor, finding that workers can become estranged or alienated from aspects of their selves (either body or soul) that is used to do the work. In her recent text *Childbirth at the Global Crossroads*, Hochschild (2011b) brings her critique of alienation to the arena of reproductive labor and care work by discussing the alienation of reproductive laborers from the fruits of their labor, and of parents from the embodied reproductive labor, or from the everyday care toward these children. However, essentialist notions of the relationship that humans establish with their own sexuality, body and emotions have also been criticized (Weeks 2007; Jaeggi 2014), because they imply particular normative ideas about the nature of this relationship.

With reference to Jean Paul Sartre's famous statement *L'enfer c'est les autres* (Hell is other people), Italian autonomist Marxist theorist Franco Berardi (2009) asserts that a certain form of alienation is implicit in social relations themselves. For Sartre, alienation was nothing other than the intrinsic modality of alterity, which he considered the constitutive form of the social relation and human condition. From an existentialist perspective, alienation is considered as an unavoidable and constitutive element of the human condition, since "otherness (condition of the social relation) and reification (condition of the productive relation) both imply a loss of self" (see Berardi 2009, 34).

Updated versions of alienation critique are all to some extent built on post-structuralist critiques of the subject, and based on Foucault's claims that a subject cannot exist "of itself" in an unalienated manner somewhere beyond the social powers that form and oppress it (Foucault 1978, 2008). Foucault's notion of the "productivity of power" radically calls into question the possibility of distinguishing inner from outer, "one's own" from "alien" and social formation from individual uniqueness. If the subject is both subjected to the rules of power and at the same time constituted by them, then the distinction that alienation critique requires between self and alien, between an unrepressed (or undistorted) subject and a repressive (or distorting) power, is no longer tenable. The insight, following Foucault, that there is no autonomous subject that is capable of being sole author of its actions, must significantly impact on our critique of alienation. Considering, then, we all live in "exo-determination" (Lordon 2014)—we are all forced to do things by others and depend on each other—alienation is non-existing or universal. Judith Butler, recognizing that alienation is constitutive and unavoidable, speaks of human subjects as "[v]ulnerable to terms one never made, one persists always, to some degrees through categories, terms, names and classifications that mark the primary and inaugurative alienation in sociality" (Butler 1997, 28). Seen through a feminist's lens, socialization—the way we are brought up to live and be by our culture—can be alienation (Young 1990). A broad body of feminist literature on care work has highlighted how socialized "female" qualities, such as altruism, attentiveness, docility and servility are capitalized upon in the contemporary professional care market (Vega 2009; Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2010).

The philosopher Rahel Jaeggi (2014) has produced an updated alienation critique, which is not grounded in essentialist presuppositions, neither makes paternalistic arguments affecting market actors. Considering that our reference point for alienation can no longer be a supposed essential or authentic human nature, Jaeggi (2014, 217) asserts that "overcoming alienation means not overcoming the sociality that roles represent but appropriating and transforming them." The appropriation and transformation of social roles, however, requires institutions that make self-determination and self-realization possible. Therefore, questions arise as to how institutions must be constituted so that individuals living within them can understand themselves as the (co-)authors of those institutions and identify with them as agents, and what social institutions would look like that could be understood as embodiments of freedom.

Past commodification debates in the social sciences have been influenced by the anxiety and fear that commodification might chip away more and more non-monetary aspects of our life and eventually transform all of social life and relationships into market transactions (Dodd 2014). We hope that the empirical studies from our book help restructure the way we think about commodification so as to not let it polarize into two opposing views that both constitute equally unacceptable solutions for the powerless (Radin and Sunder 2005): firstly, "protecting" intimate workers through prohibition, on the basis of the argument that intimate work is harmful and/or exploitative or alienating, and effectively preventing them from intimate market exchanges, or secondly, a liberal market view that sees no problem in intimate market exchanges, but exposes workers to exploitation and subordination, disregarding the possibly harmful and disciplining nature of the market itself.

The lived experiences of people involved in intimate markets show that intimate exchanges do not inevitably lead to alienation, objectification and dehumanization, but given particular conditions, laborers can achieve self-empowerment and self-realization through commodification practices. Miranda Joseph (2005) has coined the notion of the "multivalent commodity," referring to the idea that any given object can have multiple meanings; sometimes commodified, sometimes not, sometimes both at the same time, depending upon the context. The empirical evidence presented in this book reminds us of the ultimate importance of the context in which commodification practices take place. Central to the issue of commodification of intimacy is who has the power to control the meaning of the commodity, its value and the conditions under which the exchange takes place.

Intimate Economies and Economic Justice

Liberal theorists imagine market relations as enabling the exercise of power over commodities and not persons; therefore, the wage labor contract can be presented as an equivalent, mutual and voluntary exchange (see O'Connell Davidson 2002). Following liberal theory, intimate laborers consent to sell their goods or services, because they win from the exchange. It is a win-win situation. The "bourgeois fiction" (O'Connell Davidson 2002) that all commodity exchange is based on "free" individuals who engage in market transactions has been applied to the provision of sexual services by sex radicals (Bell 1994; Nagel 1997). Julia O'Connell

Davidson (2002), remarks, however, that "any such 'freedom' is contingent upon the existence of a particular, and highly unequal, set of political, economic, and social relations, since in general, people 'choose' neither wage labor nor prostitution unless denied access to alternative means of subsistence." She strongly contests the liberal notion that based on equal formal rights to market participation both the worker and capitalist enjoy freedom in the same way.[2] Instead, she emphasizes that "it is through this very process of exchange that the political and economic dominance of the capitalist class is maintained and reproduced" (O'Connell Davidson 2002, 86). Liberal theory that has influenced much of scholarly literature that does not condemn the commodification of intimate services, thus, also conceals existing power relations and dependence between those who can pay others to do what they want, and those who get paid to be at the disposal of those who can pay to have their desires fulfilled.

Pro-sex work feminists, for instance, have discussed ways in which the market for commodified sex is shaped by global and/or gender inequalities, and highlighted that the selling of sexual labor can represent a form of resistance to existing inequalities (see for example, Kempadoo and Doezema 1998; Cabezas 2009). While this work conducts a critical analysis of the class, gender, race and global power relations that underpin the contemporary sex industry, it has not quite been satisfactory from a transformative, emancipatory or liberation politics perspective, because named resistances constitute mere arrangements within a set status quo (under set market relations and values) that works only for those laborers with high "bodily capital" (Wacquant 2004) and "biovalue" (Waldby 2002; Waldby and Cooper 2008), and is carried out under conditions of exchange which are still precarious, cannot be determined by the workers themselves, and are generally viable only for a very limited amount of time within the life of an individual.

Feminists are often single-mindedly focused on finding legal remedies (Bernstein 2007) for protecting vulnerable populations in intimate professions, rather than paying attention to the relationship between intimate and economic relations, and forging effective political strategies accompanied by viable economic solutions. In the field of reproductive rights and freedoms, the feminist debate over reproductive labor and the commodification of female bodies often neglects to address the broader concerns of economic survival and access to proper health care for women in marginal social positions and their families, as well as broader concerns of women's control over their reproductive capacities and desires (Bailey 2011;

Gurr 2015). It is wrong to separate the discussion regarding contracted motherhood and gamete provision from broader feminist concerns toward forced sterilization of minority populations, access to contraception and abortions, as well as colonial histories of control over reproduction and the trade in people of color (Vora 2015). It is also wrong to separate this discussion from the social and economic contexts, which make some bodies "bioavailable" for the needs of the state, the market and racialized-gendered regimes of power (Cohen 2004). Bailey suggests adopting the framework of reproductive justice in order to address surrogacy, as well as other forms of reproductive commerce, with "epistemic honesty" overcoming Eurocentric analysis while taking into account the "broadest concerns of surrogacy worker's lives" (Bailey 2011, 716–717). In this framework, reproductive justice is broadly understood as "the complete physical, mental, spiritual, political, social, environmental, and economic well-being of women and girls" (Sistersong cited in Bailey 2011).

One thing is clear: our analysis of commercial intimacy should not result in policy practice that places the livelihood of socially and economically marginalized people further into jeopardy. Poor people's desire for economic, social and geographic mobility must be taken into account, as well as their rationalities, which are often grounded in flexibility (of work schedules) and instantaneity (of cash flows).To seriously address the burgeoning intimate economies in all of their diverse manifestations (including the circumstances of profound exploitation that some intimate laborers find themselves in) would require a much more ambitious political agenda. Firstly, a critical analysis of intimate economies requires alternative conceptualizations of the self, inspired by non-Western understandings that could allow us to move beyond the liberal conception of the abstracted individual and forge new relational conceptions of the self and of personal sovereignty based on the preservation of and care for others (Brace 1997). Secondly, if we wish to advance or represent the interests of more than just privileged women from the Global North, we need to look beyond the market and liberal discourse on the market, contractual consent and freedom of the individual for theorizing intimate economies in all their complexities and globality. Thirdly, we need to thoroughly analyze the global inequalities of sex, class and race, in the context of unjust international labor distribution and resource extraction, which lie at the basis of many poor women's engagement in dangerous and precarious intimate labor arrangements. When Juhu Thukral and Melissa Ditmore from the Urban Justice Center in New York interviewed a diverse

sample of street-based sex workers in order to document the women's own assessments of their most pressing needs (in Bernstein 2007), they found that housing was their single most important requirement. In her book *Contested Commodities: the Trouble with Trade in Sex, Children, Body Parts and Other Things*, Margaret Radin (1996) suggests that there are realms of social life that should be off-limits to the market. Ultimately, however, Radin (1987) advocates for a pragmatic position with regard to "incomplete commodification" (referring to commodities that are not yet *fully* commodified, but still contested due to moral concerns about possible negative impacts on personhood). She contends, "It may be that in a nonideal world in which poor people have no choice but to sell their bodies, we ought to let them sell their bodies if we are not willing to change the world to afford them more choices, when that is clearly within our power" (Radin in Geddes 2003).

Structure of the Book

Our **first section** draws on debates on "immaterial labor"[3] that emerged in the late 1990s, which have expressed concerns with the heightened commodification of intimacy that pervades in late-modern capitalism. These debates, based on feminist and Marxist thought traditions, drew attention to the cultural and economic changes driven by globalization and increased global competition that have created a consumption-driven, service-based economy in which diverse human qualities, such as feelings, emotions and affects have become intricate parts of market exchanges. The authors demonstrate how individuals, in this context, autonomously deploy technologies of the self, steering their behaviors toward discipline, productivity and control. The chapters in this section explore (1) how workers' affective capacities are harnessed by their employers who actively promote performances of intimacy and connection at the workplace, producing increased economic gains for corporations, and (2) the experience of self-commodification from the viewpoint of the laborers/sellers, addressing the theoretical and moral questions of choice, consent and desire to participate in markets that draw on their intimate and personal capacities.

Sweta Rajan-Rankin's chapter extends current theorizing in affect studies by examining "cultural immersion" within Indian call centers. She contends that in order to sell a service, call center workers must suppress not only their feelings, but also cultural identities. The author develops the

notion of a "cybertariat," which includes an embodied cultural performance that involves the social construction of the western client and the racialized service provider. Rajan-Rankin asserts that there is a dialogic imaginary at work: just as the call center worker constructs the image of the western client, so too is the racialized worker imagined. The author's findings highlight the complex ways by which the "intimate" is co-opted, performed and resisted within global work.

Nicolas Wasser's chapter scrutinizes the role of affective labor and identity, and how promises for sexual and racial liberation are mobilized at *Visibly Hot*, a Brazilian fashion enterprise that promises its employees a young and "sexy" lifestyle. The company slogan "be different" is, on the one hand, part of a global diversity discourse and, on the other hand, an entrepreneurial tool for workers' (self)government, which draws on specific incitements to self-authenticity in relation to "black race" or "young lesbian," for instance. The author explores how the salesclerks' self-identifications with the brand have become a resource for sales that is utilized for profit maximization; simultaneously, he reveals workers' precarity and the brand's negligence for securing their right to be different in the long term.

Susanne Hofmann's chapter analyzes the meaning and relevance of emotional labor in the context of sex work in the U.S. –Mexican border city of Tijuana. In Tijuana's sex industry the management of emotions has become an expression of professionalism and also a marker of distinction between sex workers. The author engages with Arlie R. Hochschild's argument that the performance of "inauthentic" emotions at work inevitably entails negative consequences for workers and leads to estrangement or alienation, drawing attention to the fact that individuals constantly create emotions and align them to their desires and aspirations in life. Highlighting the ambiguity of emotional labor in sex work, the chapter shows that while the emotional labor involved in sex work can be demanding, it also entails a range of benefits for practitioners.

The **second** set of texts engages with the marketization of sexual bodies. The authors show how engagement in sexual markets can be induced by very different forces such as family survival, the search for beauty and a different gender identity, or by global capitalist endeavors resulting in great money flows into particular regions. Our authors go beyond Marxian understandings of the body in the economy as source of labor only, drawing on Foucault's elaborations of how power operates in modern societies, as a generative, productive force. These chapters follow the

development of markets for sexual services and for sexualized bodies, as they are driven by local histories, religions and economic institutions, and develop through the operation of global industries, migration movements or the flow of aid organizations and multi-state institutions. This part builds upon the previous section, taking us further to the frontiers of the market.

José Miguel Nieto Olivar's chapter is a reflection on the nature of prostitution relationships based on an ethnographic study. His reflections establish a dialogue between the anthropological concepts of sexuality, kinship and the body. The author explores the tension between the kinship and alliance "apparatuses" (*dispositifs*) in the context of an analysis of the social life of street prostitution in Porto Alegre, Brazil. While western analyses of prostitution often drew on sexuality and subsequently on processes of individuation, his focus on alliance constructions allows the analysis to go beyond the dialectical notions of reciprocity and commodification. His reflections offer us new insights into the intensive processes of production and transformation of bodies and relationships in prostitution.

Ngambouk Vitalis Pemunta and Tabi Chama James Tabenyang's chapter documents the experiences of migrant sex workers in N'Djamena, the capital of Chad. It explores the entrepreneurial strategies of Cameroonian sex workers as a way to adapt themselves to and cope with the neoliberal political and economic context. The authors show that sex work in the oil-rich state of Chad constitutes a resource that women exploit, which allows them to sustain themselves and their families, and provides a sense of hope to overcome hardship in the future.

Néstor Nuño Martínez analyses how bodies and identities are shaped by the opening of markets for body modification techniques and substances. The chapter follows the lives of *waria*, a gendered identity of feminine-male in the city of Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The recent democratization of Indonesia and the opening of borders created opportunity for *waria* to seek hormonal treatment and silicone injections, either by traveling to neighboring states which provide such treatments or by accessing substances and treatments on a black market locally. These consumption practices become at once "life-enabling" practices for their promise of gender modification, while they also pose life-threatening dangers as their provision without medical care involves harms and complications. The relations between consumption, identity and neoliberal markets arise through this chapter as a complex and contradictory relationship.

The **third section** of our volume engages with the literature concerning the commodification of reproductive capacities and reproductive bodies. Since the development of In-Vitro-Fertilization (IVF) technology in the late 1970s, third-party reproductive commerce has become a global multi-billion industry involving actors from the affluent countries (mainly as gamete providers and consumers) and from the developing countries (as reproductive laborers/sellers), generating new and contested forms of kinship across geographic and social borders. This section extends our understanding of commodifying not just of selves, but of relationships and the potential of new relationships (and indeed new lives). The chapters in this section also focus on legislations, regulations and market frameworks that engender processes of increased commodification of all aspects of the human body.

Sophie Anne Lewis proposes a new reading into gestational surrogacy as a form of alternative to reproductive relations in the Marxist sense. Instead of reading surrogacy as a form of deformed, alienated pregnancy, Lewis suggests analyzing every pregnancy through the prism of surrogacy. Basing her analysis on feminist-Marxist theories of the 1960s and 1970s and the movement for wages for housework, Lewis suggests utilizing surrogacy as means of rethinking family relations and capitalist production.

Anindita Majumdar explores commercial cross-border surrogacy relations through two participant groups: surrogacy mothers from rural India and gay commissioning fathers. Both groups carry potential stigmatization and are located in a liminal position within the reproductive trade. On the one hand, gestational surrogates often derive from social classes whose reproductive capacities are suspect and subject to social scrutiny in India. Their participation in the surrogacy trade puts them under additional stigma, as surrogacy is often misunderstood in their communities as involving sexual conduct. At the same time, participation in surrogacy trade can also involve empowerment and greater social respect as result of the receipt of a salary. On the other side, Majumdar also portrays the gay commissioning fathers, who are often excluded from reproductive consumption in their country of origin, and who through the participation in cross-border reproductive commerce are enabled to realize their desire of family making and parenting.

Adi Moreno addresses the question of commodification from the perspective of commissioning parents: Israeli gay men who become fathers through surrogacy. Surrogacy fathers express conflictive feelings

about their role as consumers in the reproductive trade, and about the potential meaning of these markets to the surrogates they employed, to egg donors and to their future children. In an attempt to resolve these conflicts, many fathers emphasized emotions of gratitude and feelings of long-lasting commitment toward the surrogates they employed. The research found that the fulfillment of these desires for reciprocity and fairness relied both on the regulative framework within the surrogacy state, and on the outcome of the reproductive effort—that is the success of achieving pregnancy and reaching the birth of a live, healthy child.

The three strands of debates that we bring into an analytical conversation here cannot be entirely separated or neatly distinguished from each other, but are often interconnected. Different kinds of physically intimate labor are often interlaced with emotional labor as well. Sex workers, for instance, who engage in physically intimate work, may also manipulate their own emotions to please customers or employers, with the intension to increase their income or establish favorable working conditions. Surrogate mothers often have to engage in the emotional labor of detaching themselves from the newborn baby they are giving away yet maintain "intimate-like" relations with commissioning parents. In the post-Fordist era of the global economy, when even most traditional occupations involve adjusting the laborers' selves and bodies to the needs of the labor market, the commerce of intimacy has become ubiquitous. This collection of essays calls for empirical, situated responses to these challenges and new politics of justice and freedom, based on actual lived experiences and on respect for the needs and desires of the most vulnerable, marginalized laborers around the world.

Notes

1. Posted to G-Strings and Infamy Blog on June 27, 2013.
2. It is important to be aware of the significant differences between intimate workers. The extent to which they are exposed to or embedded in capital-intensive industries differs considerably and impacts on their bargaining position (e.g. the surrogate mother who must negotiate with bureaucrats, legal experts and scientists from huge bio-laboratories versus an independent sex worker who plies her trade without intermediaries).

3. The term "immaterial labor" describes forms of labor which primarily draw on workers' affective and cognitive capacities and which do not result in a material product.

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PART I

Commodifying Affects, Emotions and Selves

CHAPTER 2

The "Authentic Cybertariat"? Commodifying Feeling, Accents, and Cultural Identities in the Global South

Sweta Rajan-Rankin

Introduction

In his classic text, *Labor and Monopoly Capitalism*, Braverman (1999) highlights the relationship between technology, intimate relationships, and bodies within the global capitalistic project. The widespread increase in information communications technology (ICT), the 24/7 global economy, and replacement of face-to-face customer service with automated systems, have fundamentally altered ways of working in the "new economy." The geo-political landscape created by these new economies (Russell and Thite 2008) has transformed the ways in which labor is embodied, commodified, regulated, and "sold" as part of a service. These trends and processes need critical attention.

This chapter draws on a post-colonial framing (Bhabha 1994; Fanon 2008; Spivak 1990, 1998, 1999; Said 2003) to explore the ways in which outsourcing of call center work in the Global South, leads to a commodification

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of the "intimate," of bodies, affect, and selfhoods. A rowing body of literature has begun to contemplate not only how work is being "done" in different parts of the world, but also how specific types of labor performed by individuals and groups with certain embodied characteristics can reproduce power inequalities in terms of gendered and racial division of labor (Mirchandani 2005; Poster 2002). At a macro-level, this involves peeling away the layers of global capitalism to expose the impact on workers within.

The notion of "global scapes" is especially relevant here (Appadurai 1996, 2). The broad principle of global scapes is that all social forces have "precursors, precedents, analogues, and sources in the past," and a cultural "imagination" helps us to reframe ideas of modernity within contemporary times. In particular, the notions of "technoscapes" (new types of cultural interaction emerging in the knowledge economy), and "ethnoscapes" (migration of people, cultures, and ideas), highlight how global work is not just about the redistribution of labor, but also about culture(s) within which labor operates. Thus, "the very structure of our labor process [brings] global and local together, [hauling] us out of sites and into global connection" (Buroway et al. 2000, 4). Any study of global economies must hence engage with their "cultural genealogy" (a situated understanding of where we have come from, and the politics of where we are going) in examining how these processes influence the intimate and embodied personscapes of our lives.

Moving from the global to an examination of the intimate, we need to consider *what precisely is being commodified*. Pratt and Rosner (2013, 3) challenge the dualistic assumptions underpinning local/global and intimate/global binaries. They state "intimacy does not reside solely in the private sphere; it is infused with worldliness. Nor is it purely personal: intimacy takes on a specific political, social, and cultural meaning in different contexts." Global work is ultimately embodied work and that which is "intimate"—workers' bodies, emotions, sexuality, and identity—is manipulated, molded, and represented in specific ways that are shaped by global forces. I will argue in this chapter that unlike body work such as sex work where the commercialization of the intimate is much more explicit (Wilson 2004), there are other forms of global interactive service work where the commodification of voices, emotions, and identities is more insidious and invisible. It is these forms of "new" service work that are the central subject of this chapter.

In the context of globally outsourced call center work (where Western companies outsource back-end customer service operations to developing

country markets in order to reduce labor costs) (Rajan-Rankin 2013), the intimate economy is commodified in various ways. This chapter attempts to enflesh these processes. By exploring the concept of the "cybertariat," this chapter examines the ways in which human labor is masked and mediated through the use of ICT and locational masking practices. The commodification of affect and identities is explored in the ways call workers suppress their emotions and cultural identities to sell a service. Further, by drawing on a post-colonial examination of transnational call center work, the commodification of affect, accents, and cultural identities is considered within the context of gendered and racialized discourses of global work.

The Cybertariat and the Absent-Present Body

The "cybertariat" is a new economy worker whose labor (mediated by information communications technology), transcends geographical boundaries, time zones, and cultural terrain. Ursula Huws (2003) coined this term in her Marxist analysis of technology workers. Viewing ICT work as a polished façade for shop-floor work, Ursula Huws (2003) considers the ways in which the cybertariat represents an oxymoron in terms of capitalistic processes. The cybertariat conjures the image of a white-collar knowledge worker, yet in reality the outsourced work is often low-end, repetitious, and poorly paid work performed by "cyber coolies" (Ramesh 2004).

ICT merges with human labor, blurring the boundaries between production and consumption, the served and the serviced (Huws 2003). This becomes more apparent by the geographical distancing of the site of the service production and the location of the serviced client. So, when a person from Belfast, Ireland calls a help-line fully expecting to receive a service in Ireland, they are in fact speaking to a call center worker in Bangalore, India *pretending to be* a call worker in Belfast. This creates a very *specific* kind of commodification of affective labor, which takes place when technology is used to mask the labor of workers located in developing countries. The locational masking of back office call center operations serves a specious purpose; to portray the call center as a global service *located in the West,* to represent their Indian worker as a Western agent, rendering the laboring body invisible behind the binary code of the tireless computer.

The use of technology fundamentally alters the way in which the laboring body is experienced. While the social world is experienced through

our bodies, Drew Leder (1990, 1) observes "this bodily presence is of a highly paradoxical nature. While in one sense the body is the most abiding and inexplicable presence in our lives, it is also essentially characterized by absence. That is, one's own body is rarely the thematic object of experience." Technology brings about a very specific form of decorporealized existence. As Leder (1990, 3) notes "via machines we are disinvested in the work once belonged to the muscles." Automated dialing systems replace human bodies with disembodied voices that are expected to transcend geographical and cultural boundaries. Through their voice alone, call workers are required to convey a range of complex emotions, meanings, cultural inferences, and generate intimacy and trust with their customers. The body becomes a mechanistic device, a receptacle for complex phenomenological and socio-cultural dialogue (Blackman 2008). Through the medium of ICT, the body becomes an "absent-present," fading into the background of the customer service encounter, replaced by corporeal imaginaries of the "Third World worker" and "Western client."

It is important to note that the call encounter is not a politically barren space, but charged with complex gendered and raced interactions. The cybertariat is rendered not only invisible, but also "raceless" in the customer service encounter. The call worker is replaced by an automaton, a mechanistic, half-humanoid, depersonalized "alien" image. It has been argued that the anonymity of the call center encounter can make call center workers more vulnerable to racist attack (Mirchandani 2005; Nath 2011; Raghuram 2013). The locational masking of the call center operation means that the colonial and imperialist implications of raced class relations in this form of work can remain unproblematized. As Mirchandani (2005, 105) notes,

> I argue that the gender segregation… of outsourced call center industry in India is situated within the context of racial hierarchies between Indian workers and Western customers, which fundamentally structure transnational service work. Gender is "eclipsed" in the sense that it is hidden behind a profound, racialized gendering of jobs at a transnational level.

The "making" of a cybertariat, is hence a study that makes visible these processes of commodification, self-regulation, and affective performance within the context of transnational call center work. My research seeks to explicate these complex processes by drawing on an in-depth qualitative study of Indian call workers, team leaders, and managers within two large global outsourcing firms in New Delhi and Hyderabad.

This chapter is structured into six sections. First, I consider the commercialization of human feeling or emotional labor within the context of customer service work. Second, the concept of "authenticity work" is considered in relation to the "tools" used to forge the cybertariat identity through the manipulation of affect, accents, and cultural identity. Third, these concepts are linked with embodiment perspectives especially in relation to race and gendered subjectivities. Fourth, the methodology for this qualitative study is detailed and the data analysis approach is described. The fifth section uses critical discourse analysis to unpack the layers of meaning in the affective performance of call center workers. Finally, this chapter concludes with a critical note of the contribution of this study and new directions for affect studies research.

Emotional Labor and Commercialization of Human Feeling

Call centers provide a unique work environment in which ICT intersects with human labor. It refers to a dedicated service in which customer service representatives (CSR) use automated dialing systems to make and take calls, replacing face-to-face contact (Belt et al. 2002). Call centers have historically been characterized as workplaces with heavy work schedules, repetitious work with heavy monitoring and surveillance (Taylor and Bain 1999). Fernie and Metcalf (1998, 3) note:

> …the possibilities for monitoring behavior and measuring output are amazing to behold—the "tyranny of the assembly line" is but a Sunday school picnic compared to the control that management can exercise over computer telephony.

This has in turn led to the characterization of call center work as "assembly lines" (Taylor and Bain 1999), "electronic sweatshops" (Fernie and Metcalf 1998) and "bright satanic offices" (Bain and Taylor 2002). More recent work on call centers has attempted to tease out variations in workflows in call centers, with some processes representing high autonomy knowledge work, while others remaining front-line work with little task autonomy or control (Taylor et al. 2002). Jaarsveld and Poster (2013) argue that call center workers have a complex task of having to sell a service to customers through the management of their vocal cues, manner, and the impression they create over the phone. This is in keeping with existing

research that the characteristics most valued in customer service work are passivity, compassion, and servitude (McDowell 1997); a performance that is in keeping with the post-colonial imaginary of the "master" and the "servant" (Upadhyay 2009). The (re)production of these discursive approaches within call center work, requires customer service representatives to act in a certain way, to display specific behavior that is likely to engender a desired response from the customer: to engage in the performance of emotional labor.

Several studies have examined ways in which customer service representatives are forced to "smile down the phone" and perform their emotional labor in a virtual environment (Niven et al. 2013; Nath 2011; Raghuram 2013). The concept of emotional labor was popularized by Arlie Hochschild in her classic study of flight attendants which enabled her to elaborate on a specific type of labor linked with the management of emotion that is implicit and yet core to the performance of a human service.

> I use the term *emotional labor* to mean the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display; emotional labor is sold for a wage and therefore has *exchange value*. I use the term *emotion work* or *emotion management* to refer to these same acts done in a private context where they have *use value* (Hochschild 1983, 7).

Drawing on the work of Erving Goffman (1959) and Stanislavski (1965), Hochschild constructs emotional labor as a specific form of human labor involving a dramaturgical performance. Goffman suggests that human behavior in social settings can be understood in terms of display rules which operate in the "front stage" and "back stage" of a relational encounter. Thus, flight attendants may have to smile, appear courteous, and "genuinely" interested in their clients, in order to ensure that those flying with that airplane feel like they are receiving a quality service. There are several different layers of commercializing of human feeling that may operate in the performance of emotional labor. Firstly, emotional labor requires the worker to have face-to-face or voice-based direct interaction with the customer in order to be effected. It is therefore entirely relational in nature and takes on different forms in virtual and face-to-face encounters. Secondly, the manipulation, suppression, or regulation of human feeling in order to sell a service involves effort or *labor*, the extension of private emotion for public use. The synonymous association between the smile of

a customer service representative and the brand image of the service being sold suggests that the corporate space is *co-opting the intimate*. Thirdly, there is a performative element to emotional labor. Stanislavski (1965, 22) helpfully distinguishes between two types of affective performance: "deep acting," where the intimate self-feeling rule is evoked in order to develop a congruent outward display (feeling sad, to look sad) as opposed to "surface acting" which involves only the manipulation of the facial or overt display, not imbibing a change in the feeling state. It is therefore not enough for the worker to feel a specific emotion in order to perform their job effectively, but they must also *perform* this emotion in a way that brings about the desired outcome for their work. Goffman, Stanislavski, and Hochschild are alluding to the "feeling space" by which the worker commercializes emotive qualities of being genuine, good quality, trustworthy and reliable, and imbibes them within the service. The use of intimate feelings to sell a service can place a different kind of burden on the worker, an emotional burden that transcends the technical knowledge being imparted. This could generate an expanded range of human capacities, or in the commercialization of the intimate, could involve the "selling" of the workers themselves.

While the concept of emotional labor is useful in teasing out the invisible and almost abstract forms of labor performed as part of the global economy, it is far from being unproblematic. The central tenets of Hochschild's argument: the dichotomy between private and public spheres of emotion, and a separation of "true" and "false" selves have been subject to criticism. Wouters (1989), for example, observes these dichotomies to be over-simplistic, an artificial theoretical divide created to accentuate the difference between emotions in the front stage and the back stage of customer service interaction. Bolton and Boyd (2003), similarly, argue that Hochschild's concept of the *Managed Heart* inaccurately assumes that all emotions are manipulated as part of waged labor, leaving the worker always constrained rather than able to demonstrate agentic processes. A more balanced position is taken by Brook (2009) who considers the alienation assumption of Hochschild's emotional labor thesis to be eventually useful in highlighting the processes by which global capitalism alienates the worker from his/her labor.

My own criticism of Hochschild's construction of emotional labor emerges from its largely depoliticized nature, which considers emotions only at an individual or at best dyadic relational level, and does not consider the cultural and socio-historical frame within which this emotive

performance is being evoked. Why is it that female bodies are more likely to be in flight attendant jobs, and hence more likely to perform this sort of emotional labor? Why is it that the types of emotive performances coaxed out of flight attendants are attempting to create an archetypal image of feminine social skills? By focusing on emotional labor and display rules at the exclusion of the bodies that perform this labor, Hochschild's thesis provides only a partial account of the labor being produced. A more situated analysis of emotional performance is provided by Sara Ahmed (2004, 4) who seeks to uncover "how emotions work to shape the surface of individual and collective bodies." By doing this, Ahmed is seeking to connect the intimate labor of individual emotional displays, with wider collective and historical experiences of identity. She defines the "cultural politics of emotion" as follows:

> So emotionality as a claim *about* a subject or a collective is clearly dependent on relations of power, which endow 'others' with meaning and value… I want to reflect on the processes by which 'being emotional' comes to be seen as a characteristic of some bodies and not others, in the first place (Ahmed 2004, 4).

I draw on the concept of emotional labor as a useful concept in considering the commercialization of human feeling in the context of call center work, but apply it as a generative tool of analysis within a broader frame of the cultural politics of emotion. This enables a richness to analysis, by asking why certain types of embodiments are required to perform specific types of emotional labor in order to reproduce and reinforce the existing global inequalities of gender, race, and nation.

"Authenticity Work" and Commodification of Identity

Hochschild (1983) considers the quandary that workers face in their "search for authenticity." She differentiates between "a true self" and a "false self" which is contingent not on the content of feeling experienced, but the extent to which they are adopted as consonant with one's sense of purpose. Therefore, emotional dissonance between the smiling flight attendant and a generally cheerful person undertaking this role would not be too distinct for example, and it would not be overly troublesome for the false self to be adopted as the true identity as part of the reproduction of one's professional persona.

However, recent research has provided a more nuanced analysis of authenticity work which transcends the true/false self-dichotomy. Due to the outsourcing of customer service work from a (generally Western) country to a developing country market with a different time zone, culture, and linguistic tradition, the outsourcing companies adopt risk-averse strategies requiring call workers to embody and perform the image of a "Western worker." This cultural performance is required in order to mask the locational distance between the service provider and those who are serviced (e.g. the oxymoron of the HSBC bank's claim to be "the world's local bank"). This projection of locality, of nearness, attention, and intimate understanding of customer need, is in accordance with Ahmed's (2004) idea of emotion being used as a way to inscribe individual and collective bodies into "us" and "the other." Authenticity work hence performs the role of rendering the "other" invisible under a thin veil of generic Westernized imagery. In her original and influential work, Mirchandani (2012, 8) describes "authenticity work" as follows:

> Indian customer service agents … simultaneously… (construct)… themselves as foreign workers who do not threaten Western jobs, as legitimate colonial subjects who revere the West, as real Indians who form an offshore model workforce providing the cheap immobile labor needed in the West, as flexible workers who are trainable and global, as workers who are faraway yet familiar enough to provide good services to their customers.

The above definition of authenticity work captures multiple meanings. By replacing one's own cultural identity with a Western pseudonym, accent, and performed identity, the call center worker is being an "authentic" colonial subject. Reference to "faraway yet familiar" is an attempt to reconstruct the cultural context of work that was deconstructed through the process of global outsourcing.

This line of investigation has yielded some interesting insights into the cultural frame within which identity alongside emotion can be recolonized and commercialized. Sarah Ahmed's (2000) notion of "stranger fetishism" is particularly relevant here. A byproduct of post-coloniality, the "stranger," is used as a classifying device to legitimate identities according to colonial and racial hierarchies. Thus, "good emotions" are linked to embodied characteristics that are distanced from the non-white other. It is hence "safer" for clients to speak to customer service representatives who have Western names and Western accents, and are more "like us." It also resonates with Homi K. Bhabha's (1994, 122) notion of "mimicry" as an

implicit expectation of the colonial project to reproduce the "subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite." As Ashcroft et al. (1998) observe, mimicry is not far from mockery and ambivalence in post-coloniality can profoundly disturb the relationship with the "other." Shehzad Nadeem's (2015) research explores the ways in Indian call workers use mimicry in subtle and outright obvious ways, not as an act of subservience, but appropriation, acquiescence, and resistance. He observes, "mimicry is not a crude caricature of other ways of being, nor is it the unproblematic transplantation of foreign norms, it signifies their appropriation and transformation as they are anchored in different terrain" (Nadeem 2015, 9). The processes by which identity work impacts upon call workers' post-colonial subjectivities and identities is still being uncovered. This research attempts to contribute to these debates.

Racialization and Aesthetic Labor

Interactive service work has long been identified as an embodied performance. McDowell (2009) suggests that commoditization of bodies can take place in numerous ways including through the gendered performance of passivity and servility in customer service work, and the racialization of "dirty work" performed by migrant workers in transnational contexts. This process of combining certain aesthetics of work with corporeal attributes of workers is called "aesthetic labor" (Witz et al. 2003) and can perpetuate racialization in global service work. Warhurst and Nickson (2009, 388) refer to "aesthetic labor" as follows:

> This labor refers to the hiring of workers with corporeal capacities and attributes that favorably appeal to the senses of the customers and which are then organizationally mobilized, developed and commodified through training, management and regulation to produce an embodied style of service.

Within transnational call centers, aesthetic labor is performed through "identity management" and the reification of Western work identities and suppression of non-Western voices, accents, names, and bodies in order to produce this global worker image (Mirchandani 2004, 2012). In her study of offshored Indian call centers, Vandana Nath (2011) highlighted complex forms of identity regulation including accent training and modulation, adoption of Western pseudonyms, and masking the location of the worker. These cultural immersion practices have implicit within them,

the prioritization and value given to Anglo-Saxon culture, English language, and Westernized ways of speaking, being, and behaving. Indeed, as Paramasivan and Nair-Venugopal (2012, 164) observe:

> Language training programs in Indian call centers aim to neutralize Indian accents in order to be intelligible to Western customers… it is reflective of racism that occurs through aurality, since Indians are required to de-Indianize and take on American linguistic identity.

This form of linguistic imperialism and racialized aesthetic labor can in turn create role ambiguity and identity conflict (Nath 2011; Raghuram 2013) and are played out in everyday practices, in the dilemmas of "dressing English, acting Indian." Rajan-Rankin and Tomlinson (2013) observe that these clashes between traditional and modern normative ideologies regarding gender roles can also underpin conflicts between work and family roles. Traditional Indian normative frameworks drawing on *dharmic* discourses place family unity at the center of social life. Neoliberal working frameworks on the other hand, highlight the role of individual within the collectivistic fabric of society. These cultural clashes between individualistic and collectivistic ideologies can lead to variations in aesthetic labor management, from surface acting of Western roles at work, and Indian roles at home, to much more nuanced performance of hybrid (mixed) identity formations in both work and family spheres (see Paramasivan and Nair-Venugopal 2012 for a full treatment of these issues).

However, more recent studies have begun to flesh out ways in which call center workers are able to exercise autonomy and agency and demonstrate resistance within call centers. Tina Basi's (2009) ethnographic study of women call center workers challenges the stereotypical view of call centers as electronic sweatshops, and suggests instead that these new economy workplaces have offered women workers cosmopolitan identities. These views are in line with Murphy's (2011) social class analysis of Indian call center workers as emergent members of a global middle class, where middle-class values, lifestyles, language, and behavior are an endemic part of cultural globalization.

While it is attractive to consider spaces of resistance and agency in call centers, it is also important to consider the structural barriers to this form of embodied worker autonomy. For instance, an analysis of bodies and corporeality in Indian call centers must consider the temporality of this work. Mirchandani (2004) coined the term "colonization of time" to

describe the 12–15-hour time-lag between Indian and American companies operating in different time zones. This means that Indian call workers must work through the night in order to service American companies during their day-time hours. Patel's (2010) analysis of spatial, temporal, social, and economic mobilities becomes especially important when considering the impact of agency and structure in the performance of aesthetic labor (by mostly female workers) in night-time work. While it is possible that women workers in the call center industry can enjoy more mobility and freedom by working in evening/night shift work, (a space historically denied to women under patriarchal control), the lack of concomitant cultural change in organizations and societal attitudes has meant that women workers may also be at higher risk of sexual harassment, rape, sexual assault, and exploitation (BBC 2014). Thus, women's mobility in night-time work could serve as "symbols of inverted moral order, (where) women workers signify through their bodies male inadequacies and national failure" (Siddiqi quoted in Patel 2010, 4). While economic advantages for Western countries to downsize and outsource their customer service operations to night-shift workers in India is clear, it raises the question: what are the costs to the workers themselves?

This chapter seeks to contribute to the debates about the commodification of gendered and racialized labor in the global economy by asking the following research questions: (1) How do call center organizations train workers in identity management practices to produce "authentic workers"? (2) What impacts do identity management and regulation have on the self-identity of call center workers in managing their work and non-work identities? (3) What are the different ways in which the performance of aesthetic labor affects the affective performance of call center workers?

Methodology

In order to address these research questions, an exploratory qualitative methodology was adopted to allow for a rich, contextualized understanding of call center workers' lived experiences (Miles et al. 2014). The author was the principal investigator and employed a team of doctoral students, to conduct 50 qualitative interviews with call center workers, team leaders, trainers, managers, and policy experts in a large transnational call center in Hyderabad, South India and New Delhi, North India. Ethical approval was provided by the authors' institution, and an advisory panel of academics from higher education universities in New Delhi/India also provided guidance and support concerning fieldwork.

Access and organizational approval was made possible with a large globally offshore call center with regional offices in Hyderabad, South India, while snowballing techniques were used to access call center operators in New Delhi, India. The author also produced ethno-diaries to capture "thick descriptions" (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007) of the context and conversations that took place during her observations in the call center sites.

The participant profile was characteristic of the industry profile with more men than women in the international call centers (it is reversed in domestic call centers), large number of graduates and highly educated workers, mostly young single workers, with only a few team leaders and managers reporting that they were married and had young children (see Rajan-Rankin and Tomlinson 2013). All the participants worked for the global process in the international call center, were involved in voice-based customer service, and had been working at the company for a minimum of six months. All names of participants have been anonymized, and pseudonyms have been used throughout.

A critical reflexive approach was taken to analyze the data (Finlay and Gough 2003) and the researcher's positionality, and observations added an embedded understanding to the theoretical construct informing the study. The author is a post-colonial theorist and her positionality clearly emerges from being an Indian women and scholar trained in the West and researching in both the West and the East. This resonates with Nair-Venugopal's (2012) epistemic approach of shifting the "gaze from the West, to exploring framings in the East." Drawing on this dual lens, the taken for granted elements of daily practices in call centers are able to receive critical attention while the local and embodied practices emerge from participant voices themselves. Given that much of the cultural immersion training processes involves a manipulation of linguistic identity, a critical discourse analysis (CDA) was used to highlight an analysis of dialectical relations between discourse and other objects, elements or moments, as well as the "internal relations of discourse" (Fairclough 2013, 4). Some of the key and emergent themes from the research are discussed below.

The Alien and the Familiar: The Paradox of the Call Center

My first visit to Hi-Tech City, the modern IT-enabled Services (ITeS) hub located outside Hyderabad in South India, evoked an impression of stark contrasts. Located near the rural hinterlands of Andhra Pradesh, are large futuristic buildings of glass, steel, and chrome. My ethnodiary captures the

"alienness" of the transnational call center enterprise within the backdrop of its largely rural landscape.

> There is an out of this world quality to the buildings, architecture and infrastructure of the IT-enabled services in Hi-Tech City. One is confronted with elaborate glass and chrome buildings, each distinctive and completely at odds with the surrounding rural landscape. The space itself is simultaneously inviting and forbidding. Walking up to the entrance of a large international BPO[1] company, I am frisked, all electronic items are taken from me, mobile phone, camera, laptop. Suitably denuded of my technological accompaniments, I step through the armed entrance of the call center, to be let into what feels like an inverted aquarium. Glass walls, glass offices, a complete panopticon with no privacy at all. No place to hide, no place to be "unauthentic."

These descriptions of the call center bring together the paradoxical image of the global economy workplace, with the local and regional context of the Indian cultural scene. Contrasts and paradoxes are evident everywhere—rural versus hyper modernity, open plan offices, and high levels of surveillance. The spatial arrangements of call centers in India, remain otherworldly, in some ways because they are performing work in service of "another world." Ahmed (2000, 4) suggests that the "stranger" provides a metaphorical lens toward understanding and constructing ourselves. "Stranger fetishism is a fetishism of figures: *it invests the figure of the stranger with a life of its own, insofar as it cuts off "the stranger" from the history of its own determination*." In the context of globally offshored call centers in India, the buildings, infrastructure, and work environments are in some ways attempting to create an imagery of the "Other"—as a dialogic space between the Indian customer service representative and the Western client.

These paradoxes and contrasts persist in relation to the different discourses and language used by the team about the work they do.

> It is now my fifth visit to the call center and the atmosphere is visibly relaxed. Even the guards know me and I feel as if I am becoming "one of the family." Imagery of family values is everywhere. I round a corner towards the shop floor to encounter the company's mission statement "To promote social justice, to work together as a team and promote company values." What are these company values I wonder? Are they consonant with the image management and cultural immersion training I have witnessed the last few weeks?

> When I meet Vikram (team leader) again he explains to me the importance of getting the ambience and environment right in the call center. "These boys and girls have to do pretty routine and dull work. We try to make sure from the décor, to their office, to their environment, everything is bright and looks attractive, looks smart… They should feel like they are part of the company, part of the brand." I am keenly struck by the choice of his words, his "boys" and "girls"—the paternalistic language; the managerial control over the workers, the attempt to equalize and get rid of hierarchies, while instilling new hierarchies, albeit only in an aesthetic sense.

The second ethnodiary extract helps us to tease out the contrasts between the neoliberal discourses on globality and traditional paternalistic discourses (I discuss this in a recent article (Rajan-Rankin 2016)). Everyday social practices and work environments are being strategically altered to help workers gain a sense of belonging to a "global brand" and a "global workplace." Thus, when workers work for General Electric or Accenture, they do not work for the outsourced call center company, they work for and become part of the global brand. This is beginning of the processes of cultural immersion.

Image Management and Cultural Immersion

The process by which call center workers have been trained to mask and change their cultural identity has been described in many ways including—"image management," "authenticity work," "cultural immersion," or "soft skills training." In order to more fully understand the genesis of this approach and the philosophical underpinning of why it has been adopted in global offshored call center work, opinions from various professionals were sought.

> The extent to which a company adopts a cultural immersion package depends on how risk-averse they are. You have to understand BPO companies do not decide one fine day "our young people should adopt Western names or engage in locational masking." This is all decided by the global client's package when they outsource to Indian BPOs. If their framework is a rigid one, where they want to maintain the service is located in the home country, then yes, some amount of cultural immersion training and soft skills training is inevitable. (Nalini, 45 years, Policy Expert, ITeS)
>
> Soft skills training is really growing in Indian BPOs. We have qualified V&A [voice and accent] trainers whose main job is to train our youngsters to work on their accents. You have to understand; the purpose is not to have

> a perfect English or American accent. The purpose is to get rid of "mother-tongue" influence so as to get accentless English. The main purpose is for them to be understood by the client. (Sarika, 37 years, female trainer)
>
> Interviewer: So you do not really focus on a specific type of accent or market audience?
>
> Sarika: Not really, it's like a generic Western accent…

These quotations present a very complex discursive representation of the objectives of cultural immersion, and the mechanisms by which it is delivered. The policy expert suggests that the extent to which call center workers must mask their cultural identity, (including adopting Western pseudonyms, changing their accents, and hiding the location of their service) are a central aspect of the outsourcing "package." The more risk-averse the company, the more likely there is a need for full cultural immersion or masking of cultural identity. The notion of "risk" management is especially relevant here. The underpinning discourse is that there is something innately risky about third world, non-Western worker identities. Or, that exposing the service location as not being in the West, but located in the East, somehow damages the brand value, or the "authenticity" of their service. Either ways, the assumptions of this risk aversion management strategy are inherently racialized and reproduce colonial imaginaries of "Us" and the "Other" (Prasad and Prasad 2002). Even if customer service representatives operated under a low risk outsourcing package and could use their own names, this would be in spite of their cultural identity, not because of it.

Sarika's quotation is particularly telling of the lack of specificity of the imagined Western worker role that the Indian customer service representatives are expected to adopt. A reverse post-colonial imaginary applies here about the "generic Western role," or that of "accentless" English. An assumption that the globalized worker (cybertariat) is somehow culture-free and as long as the "tell-tale" signs of accent, regionality, aurality, and Indianness can be sufficiently masked under the guise of a pseudo-Americanized accent, this would be sufficient to ensure the CSR would be able to make themselves "understood" to their Western client. Thus, like McDonaldization and the spread of Western (mostly American) culture, goods, services, clothing, acronyms, and ways of speaking, cultural immersion or image management could be viewed as an extension of cultural globalization and imperialistic practices.

Performativity and Imaginaries of the "Western Worker"

The aesthetic and affective performance involved in being a customer service representative became apparent during the interviews through a range of displays including altering dress, appearance, environment, identity, and even accent. Sundari's account demonstrates the importance of dress and attire in evoking the Western worker and the Indian private self at work. It is particularly interesting that Sundari engages in this practice, even though, in a voice-based service encounter, her appearance would not count or help in her "smiling down the phone." Instead, she engages in aesthetic labor to enter into the state of the authentic phone clone (Mirchandani 2012) and turn "on" for the job. As Hochschild (1983) observes, being "on," can involve a series of deep and surface acting feeling rules, by which the worker transforms herself into an embodied image of the service. This is evident in Saraswati's description of not being able to "shake it off," indicating that the adoption of the Western pseudonym and identity has involved deep acting of some sort, and that transitioning back to her own identity is an act that implicates effort.

> Sometimes I will come in to work in my *salwar kameez* (traditional Indian dress) and I will change in the bathroom just before my shift comes on. I will change into my Western clothes and I feel ready, like ready to be "on" for the job. (Sundari, 21 years, CSR)
>
> I try and stay in character, even when I am going home. It is not conscious. It just happens. Sometimes I find it hard to shake it off, and I'm still Susan and not Saraswati. (Saraswati, 25 years, CSR)
>
> It is so boring. No one can see you, you are just talking on the phone. So I make an effort for myself. I will make my nails look pretty because that's what I stare at all day holding the phone! (laughs) (Meena, 26 years, CSR)

Aesthetic labor is not limited to dress and appearance alone. Vikram describes ways in which team leaders, try to use symbolic imagery, posters, and visual props of Western or American places to help call center workers relate to Western clients, their culture, and customs.

> The team leaders, they really try and help to keep us focused and in the right mindset. Like we have pictures of the Chrysler building and Empire State Building outside our New York operations room. Most of the young hands,

> have never been there, so we try to give them a feeling of being in America, so the accent comes a bit easier. (Vikram, 30 years, team leader)

Further, call center workers engaged in global service operations are often given more value and status (potentially due to their proximity to the Western "other") than domestic call center operators who work with the same cultural audience. This is reflected in the much higher pay scales for global offshore call center workers compared to domestic customer service representatives.

> As much as they say it doesn't matter, there is a hierarchy. If you work for a global (call center) then people think high of you. You have good clothes, good pay and a good life. Then the domestics (national call center workers) come along, and you can see that the globals look down their nose at them. Even in the training to join as a CSR, there is a hierarchy, and if you are a certain type of person, with good English and a good attitude and look, then you will be in global; otherwise you are stuck in domestic services. (Ahmad, 25 years, CSR)

Ahmad's view of the power hierarchies between global and domestic services, are also indicative of Paramasivan and Nair-Venugopal's (2012) idea of linguistic imperialism and the value given to English over local and regional languages in the global market.

Emotional Labor and Regulation of Feeling on the Shop Floor

When considering the role of emotional labor or suppression and manipulation of feeling as part of the customer service encounter, an important gender difference emerges in relation to imaginaries regarding Western clients (middle-class white women) and the Indian CSR (middle-class, non-white women and men in a service role). These imagined customer service roles then produced deeply gendered responses to the ways in which emotions were managed on the shop floor. Differences were also observed in the ways in which male and female CSRs coped with difficult and irate customers.

> It's mostly ok. Sometimes you get some angry ladies shouting on the phone. They can use curse words and stuff… but I just ignore it, it's only one call… there will soon be another one. (Malik, 20 years, CSR)

It is especially interesting that Malik equates the angry and irate customer as being an "angry lady," suggesting that the quality of being emotional, unreasonable, and irate is a feminine characteristic. He performs his masculinity by shrugging off the uncomfortable encounter as being "just another call." This is in sharp contrast to how Pavitra, a young female CSR deals with irate and difficult customers.

> I can sometimes spend most of my time in the bathroom crying… it can be too much. Call after call, everyone yelling. Sometimes I don't want to go back to work. (Pavitra, 23 years, CSR)

There is a clear indication that the abuse and anger she receives as part of her job from clients is not just an occupational hazard of her work, but has a direct and damaging effect on her self-esteem and ability to cope. Descriptions of "hiding in the bathroom" indicate the need to mask or suppress her feelings when she is not "on call," and "not wanting to go back to work" suggests an effort, the emotional labor of having to perform her job, while feeling aggrieved and verbally assaulted by a customer in a previous call. There is some recognition that call handling and managing aggressive customer complaints can be a stressful activity. The team leaders and managers describe ways in which they try to relieve work pressure by organizing social activities and games with the CSRs. This, however, does feed into the paternalistic practice of managing workers by distracting them from their distress, rather than addressing the structural basis of customer abuse.

> It can be stressful, yes there is no doubt. It is repetitive work, but if you do it night after night, and most of them are complaint calls, our CSRs can feel quite stressed. To combat the stress, we make sure there are team motivation events. We regulate their shifts so they don't do two consecutive night shift weeks, but have day shifts in the middle. We also have *Antakshari* (musical games) to lighten the mood when they are not on call. (Khalid, 35 years, team leader)

The performance of emotional labor also raises interesting questions about assumptions concerning masculinities at work. Vikram's anecdote about the failure of home-based working in a transnational call center in Bangalore tells us about the deeply entrenched views of the male-bread winner model among Indian workers.

> There was a funny example of how some Western work methods don't really work here in India. In my ten years of working in the BPO sector, I worked in Bangalore where they had just instituted home-based working to reduce the cost of office space. After trialing it for two weeks, the CSRs were begging us to come back to the office! I asked why and they said "Sir, everyone is laughing at us Sir, my neighbors think I have lost my job and I am a *ghar jamaai* (house husband). My wife has asked me to go back to the office!" (Vikram, 30 years, team leader)

This example highlights the challenges and effects of neoliberal working practices, as they are inserted into cultural contexts without a concomitant change in organizational culture, conflicting wider normative assumptions in the community in relation to what constitutes "real work." A man working from home undermines the performance of the male breadwinner role and is perceived to be interfering with the private sphere of the home. Social stigma associated with home-based working for male workers therefore created push factors to restore traditional gender roles within the call center work environment. These narratives provide rich evidence that call center work involves a performance, a carefully cultivated role, devised as much to sell the service as to justify the very "act" of globalization. Lived experiences from call workers themselves, however, also clearly illuminate the gaps, cracks and fissures in this performance, the context-specificity of embodied labor, and spaces where resistance may be forged.

Conclusion

How then can we better understand the commodification of labor in its myriad forms within globally offshored call center work? This research provides evidence of three distinct ways in which the "intimate" becomes commodified in the performance of transnational call center work. Firstly, a less researched area in the commodification literature is highlighted—the masking and suppression of cultural identity along with the manipulation and suppression of feeling, to sell a service. Secondly, it enables us to understand the mechanisms by which cultural immersion and authenticity work influence and appropriate corporeal representations of the body at work. Finally, this study helps to shed light on the different ways in which cultural performance and aesthetic labor intersect to create the paradoxical global cybertariat. New avenues for research emerging from this study

could include greater emphasis on the structural discourses within which emotional labor performances are being enacted, the application of cultural theory to the study of emotion and emotional labor, and a more critical treatment of the politics of affectivity in the Global South.

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Note

1. BPO stands for "business process outsourcing."

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CHAPTER 3

Regulating Sexy Subjects: The Case of Brazilian Fashion Retail and Its Affective Workforce

Nicolas Wasser

Introduction

The present chapter[1] draws on an ethnographic study of *Visibly Hot*,[2] a Brazilian company specialized in sunglasses that is selling a young and "sexy" lifestyle to its consumers. First and foremost, its brand is creating a whole architecture of attractive identifications for its own employees, unleashing manifold desires fueled by its slogan and entrepreneurial mission statement: *be different*. As this key slogan seems to bundle a variety of social aspirations, mainly those young people that are affected by lower education profiles as well as by sexual or racial prejudice like to work for *Visibly Hot*. As several salesclerks reported during my study conducted in Rio de Janeiro's shopping centers, they felt a personal bond with the brand's spirit. Unlike common fashion enterprises, they recalled, *Visibly Hot* gave them the sensation of being appreciated as individuals in their own right: "Here I can be who I am," as their common saying goes. The example of Carol—a 20-year-old salesclerk who tattooed the brand's logo on her forearm—shows that her affective longing is rooted in her coming of age as a young lesbian, placed between outer threats and inner aspirations for recognition.

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Critical research on contemporary capitalist endeavors foregrounds a considerable change in the modes of operation within the past decades. Boltanski and Chiappello (2005) speak of capitalism as provided with a special ability, one that allowed it to incorporate social arrangements and to neutralize even its most arduous critics. Queer and feminist perspectives often go in a similar direction when they try to grasp new profit-based regimes that weigh on bodies, desires and identities. With the example of a selected Ford advertising, Engel (2009) shows how brands are engineering new sexual alliances for the sake of opening markets. On the one hand, the advertising touts with Ford's engagement for the LGBT parade in Cologne, promoting its enterprise as an open-minded brand by using a "language of tolerance" that can easily be absorbed by cultural hegemony of heterosexuality: as long as the sexually deviant subjects are portrayed in terms of partnership and love, they are not painfully disturbing. On the other hand, the same advert allows for a reading specifically directed to a LGBT public. Consumers can calmly enjoy a gain in social recognition. As Engel provocatively notes, Ford can thus celebrate "in the name of love—and of increase in sales" (Engel 2009, 145).

In more radical terms, Preciado (2008) argues that global capitalism has reached the "pharmacopornographic era:" the sex industries in conjunction with the pharmaceutical industry are its contemporary motor, urging on the potency of sexual desires. The author concedes that although these desires are impossible to possess, their on-going biotechnological and audio-visual incitement functions as powerful control over subjects, whose bodies conflate the very distinction between the natural and the artificial (Preciado 2008, 39). Preciado is consistent with the thesis that these transnationally acting, post-Fordist regimes of production are based on a transformation within labor (Hardt and Negri 2000). However, she insists that the processes of subjectivation imminent to immaterial or affective labor are centrally organized around gender and sexuality (Preciado 2008, 40).

In this context, Lorenz and Kuster (2007) have proposed the term sexual labor:[3] work that produces both value as well as a gendered, corporeal and desiring subject. They argue that workers desire more than solely a good salary in order to willingly do her or his job. There must exist an appeal for recognition, making the job attractive (2007, 14): Promises that mobilize culturally aspirational identities (of sexual, ethnic, class or other content implying social capital) and turn them into integrated parts of new labor regimes. Although Lorenz and Kuster attribute a certain emancipatory

and collective playfulness to how such identities could potentially be experienced through labor, they equally stress how these working subjects subordinate themselves to precarious conditions: on the one hand because sexual labor is not recognized as such, and hence is virtually unpaid, and on the other hand because heteronormative policing creeps in such government of work, causing sensations of threat and demanding additional efforts to those who act beyond cultural—although reengineered in commercial ways—norms of bodies and desires.

Affective labor, by which I subsume here both sexual labor as well as emotional labor as classically outlined by Hochschild (2003 [1983]), has gained renewed attention within the debates about the commercialization of feeling. In quantitative terms, this is due to the global expansion of service jobs as one of the foundations of post-Fordist relations of production (Hardt and Negri 2000, 285), a process that has lately even intensified with higher velocity in Brazil than in other industrialized countries. Today, the overall service industry represents more than 60 percent of the country's GDP (Ministério do Desenvolvimento 2015).[4] In qualitative terms, there is a strong tendency of emotionalization of the tasks of customer care. Even jobs in public administration, which formerly served as symbol for a rationalized and frigidly trained worker identity, are today part of this process (Penz and Sauer 2013). However, there is still a need for more explanation of how identity performances turn into direct resources of affective laborers and profit-oriented endeavors. As Penz and Sauer rightly note, sociological debates on the "entrepreneurial self" often ignore the affective dimensions of these processes and hence the literal "somatization of the conduct of the self and of others" (2013, 126). I aim to contribute to this debate by discussing the transformation of ordinary service work with the example of Brazilian fashion retail. By stressing the significance of desires stimulated through capitalist incentives to improve workers' conduct of the self by tools of branding and diversity management, I argue that specific sexual and racial selves have turned into something like the new raw material of capital. As in the example of *Visibly Hot*, promises for social recognition unfold through excessive (self)identification by its employees, intrinsically linking labor exploitation with the lived aspirations of young salesclerks.

The present study is based on social research that combines qualitative interviewing with ethnographic data. Between 2012 and 2014, I conducted 15 semi-structured interviews in a couple of shopping centers in Rio de Janeiro with employees of *Visibly Hot*, including mainly salesclerks as well as two team leaders and a supervisor. The conversations focused

on their daily tasks in selling products, their strategies as well as their comprehension of their own and the brand's identity. Since my study is indebted to approaches close to cultural studies (Saukko 2003), it puts into focus the lived experience of the employees, understanding that their concepts of self and their everyday practices are attached in complex ways to both the managerial discourse of the enterprise as well as to the cultural contexts relating to sexuality and race. Consequently, I draw on further research material such as news articles, tweets and photo commentaries of *Visibly Hot* in popular media and the Internet. These sources do not only allow to trace the contours of the brand's "spirit," but also to better embed the employees' experiences within relations of power that both subject and enable them to act.

The first part of the chapter deals with the question of how capitalism mobilizes desires and subjects as a form of conduct. After briefly looking back to the emergence of the department store and especially the way women were affected by new profit-oriented identity politics, I describe *Visibly Hot*'s branding as an economic engineering of young employee's aspirations. Its promise to become "different" is, on the one hand, inserted in global diversity discourse and, on the other hand, produces a specific notion of personality and self-styling, for example, of "black race." This demanded "attitude" is what crosses over to a governance of the self through affective labor, and constitutes of the topic of the second part of this text. Salesclerks are reporting on their love of and self-identification with the brand, often referring to former personal experiences of racial or sexual discrimination. While their selves become immediate resources for sales, affective labor equally refers to the mobilization of emotional proximity or sexual fantasies as interactional sales strategies. Finally, the third part of the text discusses the experience of frustration by a salesclerk who resigned after two years of work at *Visibly Hot*. His elaborated critique points to the precarity and exhaustion caused by capitalist profit orientation as well as to the enterprise's unfulfilled promises for diversity. According to his report, the rhetorical celebration of gay, lesbian and black salesclerks ended in renewed control over bodies, desires and identities.

Commodities, Desires and Diversity

In his classic *Au bonheur des Dames* (1980 [1883], translated as The Ladies' Paradise), Émile Zola created undoubtedly one of the richest documentations of the social history that framed the emergence of the

department store. He takes us back to nineteenth century Paris, where capitalist ventures of the bourgeois entrepreneurs brought about a revolution not only in terms of merchandise, but also related to female gender roles. At that time, bourgeois women had just been relegated to the private realm. But with the urban retailers' investments in pretentious architecture for their stores, the situation changed considerably. These novel palaces allured with their lucid fashions and smells, thus offering new female lifestyles such as autonomous amusement and strolling without the necessity of a male escort. These seductive forces also affected women from lower social ranks. Employment at the department store promised a welcome alternative to domestic, industrial or rural work. Denise, the protagonist of Zola's novel, is an accurate example. Twenty years old, the daughter of a low waged family from the urban hinterland longs for a better and more prestigious life when she starts to work for the ladies' fashion department. But it takes only a couple of months until she finds herself confronted with the precarious reality of her employment. Although she finally succeeds in submitting herself to the corporeal norms (that correspond to the bourgeois taste and therefore should guarantee her sales), she is discharged. In fact, this occurs just as the rumor spreads that she has been having secret meetings in the storage room; meetings that her colleagues and employer imagine as sexual scenes with a male stranger. As these encounters seem to threaten the purity of those sexual connotations that constitute the basis of the sales and bargaining with the customers, Denise's behavior is sanctioned by dismissal.

According to Nava (1997), the desires and fantasies as unleashed by the spectacle of the nineteenth century department store had been accompanied by a range of public anxieties. The new masses of feminine consumers, but also of women among the commercial workforce appeared to deeply torment the social order. On the floors of the *Bon Marché* women from different origins, all driven by similar aspirations, created a formal atmosphere that gradually diluted the boundaries of social class. What is more, the specter of sexual desire was haunting Europe: the deliberation of those pleasures proper to the women, leading to debt, kleptomania, stealing and ultimately to the questioning of established models of family life. As we saw in the case of Denise, sexual transgression was mitigated and immediately punished by dismissal. More broadly, the public anxieties led to the establishment of a moral discourse, relating casual erotic encounters to feminine irrationality.

Zola had devoted himself to meticulous fieldwork before he composed his novel on the adventures of the early Parisian department stores. His observations and insights on the productive flux spurred by the spectacle of commodities are thus still helpful to think about when analyzing contemporary venues, in which social life is intrinsically tied to capital's most virtuous coups. Zola showed how commercial architecture was engineering desires, emotions and dreams. The author thus traced this process in relation to how new identities and subjects emerged from within these early capitalist endeavors. Women from different social classes found new leisure and work opportunities in the commodity palaces. But Zola was also well aware that the emancipatory promises made to those women rested on new forms of social control and economic exploitation.

My argument is that contemporary Western capitalism continues with similar strategies of incentivizing desires and identities, however, by using different channels. Refined by large business investments along the second half of the twentieth century, it is brands that now represent a capitalist institution of their own (Arvidsson 2006). Yet the brands' zone of influence exceeds any demarcated field of social and political life. As Arvidsson provocatively notes, it is rather a recent phenomenon that to spend "a night in bed talking about Apple products" (Arvidsson 2006, 3) became part of the social fabric of the everyday in industrialized countries. At the same time, recent modes of commodity culture led to what the Comaroffs tellingly labeled as "identity industry." Occasionally, ethnic groups and individuals tend to "brand their otherness" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009, 24): their identity claims fluidly transit to market instruments, a process that profoundly remodels the former conditions of political imagery and representation.

In the sphere of Brazilian retail, *Visibly Hot* has turned into one of the contemporary role models for how to create and successfully market a brand. It markets its sunglasses as symbols for young and liberated lifestyles. "Be different" and "spice up your life" are the central slogans—promoted through TV spots and Internet advertising—of this brand positioning. First, the enterprise draws on its early beginnings within the *mercado GLS* (GLS market) in São Paulo. This market segment embraces an ensemble of products, magazines, parties and leisure culture directed at "Gays, Lesbians and Sympathizers." It emerged in the 1990s and is widely seen as having contributed to both visibility and emancipation of gay and lesbian rights in Brazil (França 2006). Second, *Visibly Hot* is making use of the history of sunglasses. Since the aftermath of World War II, sunglasses

had turned into a tool of play and sexiness. According to Hartewig, the delight of "playful self-staging" (2009, 31) helped to underline both femininity and masculinity. As an ostentatious tool of consumption, they mediated the emerging cult of the body that belonged to tight swimwear, naked skin and sexiness (Hartewig 2009, 36). And what made the sunglasses particularly seductive and different from other fashion accessories lay in its facility to hide the gaze. One could seemingly become both invisible and visible in a completely different angle. *Visibly Hot* explores these cultural attachments made to sunglasses. On the one hand, it promotes its products by hyper-sexualized advertising, commonly depicting white female bodies as objects of sexual desires. On the other hand, the brand mobilizes and merges sexual desires with a general longing for altering one's identity, the idea that one could become or be a "different" person.

Emblematically, these affective techniques arranged around sunglasses are not only directed to consumers. At first hand, they are speaking to *Visibly Hot*'s workforce. Internal party events, the so-called "conventions," are intended to diffuse the brand's vision, that is, the corporate branding of *Visibly Hot*. In the words of one of the franchisees, these party events that unite up to 3000 people "inject the brand's DNA," and the collaborators afterward return to their sales points all over Brazil with a better understanding of the company's policy. Diogo, who had initially launched *Visibly Hot* as a small underground label, sees his task in motivating his workforce, as if he was a soccer coach. During the multimedia shows that happen at the conventions, he enters the stage, shouting, and invites his followers to "spice up" their lives. Many young salesclerks including my informants go into rhapsodies about Diogo's talent for being provocative and stylish, but still a friend of the common people. In public interviews given to fashion magazines and marketing professionals, Diogo always underlined that he was not interested in money. Rather, as he said, his performance was about "growing" in his specific role as the brand's creator, a kind of young-mindedness that animated him and that he would like to pass on to his team. Because, as he asserted, one should not create a static or robot-like atmosphere at work. On the contrary, the uniqueness of every employee should be respected and made to lie "at the heart" of the brand. People should be able to create a personality within his company, which then benefits from it economically.

In the managerial discourse of *Visibly Hot*, it is the category of "attitude" that frequently appears as the brand's criterion on whether an employee possesses such a promising personality. *Visibly Hot* declares

that associate partners, franchisees as well as the sales staff need to be "young-minded." The recruitment practice of the company is to select salesclerks from the age range of 18 to 23 years. It is on the basis of this youthfulness that the brand is acting upon the multiplicity of young people's aspirations. For those who are interested in a fashionable identity, the company offers projective images of coolness, of a sexually provocative femininity, of rock music and alternative lifestyle, of party culture, as well as of non-heterosexual desires. *Visibly Hot* seems to, at least partially, rely on physical moldings or expressivity of these singular personalities—in other words, on representatives of what this sexy, "different" subject could look like. However, the conception of a physically determined ideal type does not match with the managerial discourse. When I spoke to the supervisor Ana, I directed my inquiry into this direction, requesting her to compare *Visibly Hot*'s specificity of style with other fashion labels she had previously worked for. Significantly, Ana highlighted the retailer's benevolence with regard to its identity and body politics:

> *Visibly Hot* is different from other brands. For the salesclerk, the employee, he is more accepted as he is. I think this is a very positive difference, huh. I've worked in shops where we would not hire black people; we would not hire chubby people. I've been disqualified by female fashion brands because of my height, because I'm small, and I heard them clearly saying no, that they were really looking for a catwalk profile. And this is very complicated, to know that there is a professional with a certain physical characteristic, but for that store the physical characteristic comes even before the candidate's capacity. Not at *Visibly Hot*. We hire—I don't say that we hire anyone, because we try to hire professionals with excellence. But we hire any profile. We do not look if that person is pretty, ugly, fat, thin, if gay, what's the sexual orientation of the person, what kind of life she leads, this—we don't—we do not discriminate. (Ana, supervisor at *Visibly Hot*)

When Ana speaks about the breadth of the profiles hired by *Visibly Hot*, she refers to one of the recent paradigms of human resources: *Diversity Management*. This matter actually emerged in organizational studies of the 1980s when the prospect of including historically discriminated minorities promised to improve the working environment, and thus, a company's performance (Saraiva and Irigaray 2009, 338). According to a case study from a multinational company with branches in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, the entrepreneurial diversity discourse anticipates

that: (1) "the hiring of diverse employees stimulates creativity and flexibility at work," and that (2) "this democratization responds better to the diversified demands of customers" (Saraiva and Irigaray 2009, 339). *Visibly Hot* is obviously following these assumptions. As supervisor Ana pointed out, her salesclerk teams included both the "*cara evangélico*" (evangelical guy) and "that completely psychedelic guy;" as long as they did their job "with excellence," she went on, "both will have equal opportunities here."

Differences do not any longer trouble a brand's or a company's integrity. Quite the contrary—one recognizes a certain celebration of diversity (Engel 2009, 13), rhetoric of tolerance or even cultural transgression that transform and hence legitimate contemporary capitalist endeavors. It is in these ambivalent terms that I try to grasp the branding of *Visibly Hot*. As we saw, there is an intentional anti-racist and anti-homophobic stance ("we do not discriminate") that converges with the promise to "be different." But what does this difference mean, why and how is it that it can turn into capital's interest and even guarantee for more profit? Particularly the analyses made by supervisor Ana are revealing, because she repeatedly associated the people portrayed with the category of attitude. When I asked her to comment on a picture with three black girls wearing curly hair, the supervisor stated:

> They would not be hired by many brands. But we don't simply like—but we really value this. Mainly because they are black and with attitudes that value the race: their hair is cool. They do not try to force or escape this pattern. So again, I'm using the word attitude. I think they would be fully rated to work at *Visibly Hot*. (Ana, supervisor at *Visibly Hot*)

According to Ana's account, being black could be an advantageous resource of a sales employee as long as she or he is presenting behavior toward the self that stresses black race. With reference to the cool hairstyle of the portrayed group, she underlines the brand's valuation of attitude, which here takes shape in terms of an affirmative, individual handling of a specifically styled blackness. The racial authenticity Ana evokes here then means equally a distancing of those people who do not display such a style, namely those who would try to "flee" from their allegedly assigned racial otherness. As shown by studies focused on Brazil (Gomes 2003), hair is commonly negotiated as a decisive social marker for de/valuing race, since thicker and curly hair conventionally stand at the bottom of feminine

beauty ideals. According to Gomes, styling of curly hair has now equally turned into a transformative symbol of black pride, interfering in the aesthetic imperatives that stem from the colonial past (Gomes 2003, 8).

Self-commodification and Affective Labor

Retailers such as *Visibly Hot* are promoting desires that engineer new, market-oriented concepts of the self. In Ana's account we find a specific economic notion of how to deal with racial difference by means of a stylish self-affirmation. As inherent in this logic, the appeal to "being different" is asking for an identity performance that derives from a strong inner will ("conviction") and allows the subject to feel its supposed proper truth. What Ana and the marketing discourse labels as an "attitude" can actually be understood as the connector between the brand's conduct and the technologies of the self that unfold through labor. For the self-relation that *Visibly Hot* salesclerks are invoked to elaborate—a stylish, cool and sexy personality—turns into immediate social capital: it represents the brand's imageries and helps to increase sales.

It is about young people like Carol, captivated since the first time she saw a *Visibly Hot* store at the age of 17. She really loved it, as she reports, because she met there with a "more alternative crowd." By buying a range of fashion accessories, she eventually made friends with the salesclerks. Consequently, when she turned 18, getting a job at *Visibly Hot* seemed to be the best option for her. Carol said to herself that "they will accept me the way I am, with my style, with my sexual orientation." In fact, many employees echo the link she makes between *Visibly Hot* and lesbian/gay identities.[5] "Here I can be who I am" was a repeatedly uttered statement. As already indicated, this is due to the prominent idea of *Diversity Management* that literally stimulates different lifestyles in order to benefit from its economic outputs. Carol's coming of age is linked first, to having a job at 18, and second, to be recognized as an alternatively styled young lesbian. Working for *Visibly Hot* allows her to live and construct this identity through a daily practice, which is ultimately dedicated to the public realm of merchandise and consumption. Carol actually reinforces her aspiration as she imprinted the brand's symbol on her forearm.

> I love *Visibly Hot*, it was just great. I even have this here [showing her tattoo], *Visibly Hot* in my veins. ... Even if I left this company, I won't regret this, because I love the brand—it is just like me. (Carol, 20, salesclerk at *Visibly Hot*)

The effects that emanate from the brand's promises for emancipation seem to open up a possibility of selfhood that young people are striving for. According to Carol's own account, it is her "vulnerability" due to her being a lesbian that is best taken care of at *Visibly Hot* compared to other, more "conventional companies." Therefore, her identity claims should not be confounded with actual "sales of her selfhood." Neither her identity aspirations, nor her feelings have been assigned an exact price. As Radin (1992) tellingly points out, the process of commodification means not simply that something is receiving a definable monetary price (that it can be bought and sold), but rather that it gets involved in a market rhetoric which strives to handle social facts as sales transactions. Now this rhetoric is always confronted with the market-inalienability of certain things. When it reduces human practice to self-interested maximizers, it misconceives all other understandings of freedom and autonomy (Radin 1992, 177). Carol's identity claims are hence to be seen as a part of her personhood, an articulation that can never be fully absorbed by market logics nor substituted by money, albeit it unfolds in a thoroughly marketable fashion.[6]

Indeed, the affective technologies of *Visibly Hot*'s branding seem to have succeeded in what contemporary brands strive to provide to consumers and fans: tools that allow to "act, feel and be in a particular way" (Arvidsson 2006, 8). They can create a spectrum of atmospheres that strive to interfere in what people spontaneously or routinely produce as common socialities (Arvidsson 2006, 126). In other words, brandings are aimed at creating an affective intensity, making the becoming of subjects and the becoming of value to coincide (Arvidsson 2006, 93). Examples range from social events such as a child's birthday as converged with the McDonald experience to Absolute Vodka as the emblem of gay party culture. As mentioned above, *Visibly Hot* weaved the aspirations of young people into its brand profile, seducing them with the promise of a "different" identity. Due to the company's diversity discourse, especially gays, lesbians as well as blacks are mobilized as promising subjects for the brand's strategies.

Leidiane, who grew up in the neighborhoods of Rocinha, one of Brazil's largest urban *favelas*, got her first formalized job as a salesclerk at *Visibly Hot*. Unlike Carol, she did not know the brand before, but she came to like it shortly after her initiation at work. For Leidiane, the everyday at *Visibly Hot* turned into a sphere where she encountered a form of social recognition that had been previously denied to her. As she reported,

several customers told her that she was "stylish," something that she had never thought of herself. But now, she was motivated to playfully invest in her style and identity in order to cope with the daily sales.

> I heavily intend to change my style. Like, specifically in order to call attention, to appear, because the customer adores these things, like—hey, I love your hair! Thinking about myself, I don't care about these things, but it's good to look cool, something more pretentious, you know. So, I am adapting this for me, wanting to appear every week with another disguise. For example, I always judged myself—I didn't like my visual appearance because I am black. Ah, [talking to her friends] you think I should wear blond hair? Are you crazy? But one of these days, I had a customer, she was blonde, way too tall, and blacker than me; she said she was from Angola. And huh, Thursday I came here with blonde hair! That's what I want for me, you know, it's to have attitude. Ah, enough with this mainstream stuff. (Leidiane, 24, salesclerk at *Visibly Hot*)

The case of Leidiane shows how the branding of Visibly Hot affected her in a way that she could feel self-confident as a black young girl. Changing hairstyles and being cool are part of what she understands as her aspired "attitude" and simultaneously respond to what the customers "adore."

Personality and styling of the self are then crucial resources for the kind of labor that salesclerks at *Visibly Hot* have to administer. The category "attitude" refers though not only to the styling of the surface body (like hair, tattoos and additional fashion accessories), but also to an overall conduct of the self that further includes a management of both emotions and desires. "You have to look good and be nice," Marina, one of my first interviewees commented on the central trick of a *Visibly Hot* salesclerk. Arlie Hochschild's influential study about Delta Airlines (2003) introduced the question of emotional labor done by flight attendants as related to both the brand's and the attendant's identity. In Hochschild's words, this mode of capitalist labor led to the phenomenon that "seeming to 'love the job' becomes part of the job" (Hochschild 2003, 6). Delta Airlines made enormous efforts to convince their customers of the genuineness of their stewardesses' smiles. Its employees were therefore instructed by training sessions, in which they would learn about passenger attendance. As an overall target, the stewardesses were charged for emotionally creating the consumer's sensation of "comfort and well-being" (Hochschild 2003, 10).

Unlike flight attendants, *Visibly Hot* salesclerks are not called to produce a feeling of a cozy home. Rather, together with the explicit exposure of their "different" identity, they are trained to create an affective atmosphere that is destined to play with emotional intimacy. I prefer here the notion of affective labor to emotional labor based on two suggestions made within the contemporary debate on the role of feeling within the transformations of capitalist value creation. First, the notion of emotional labor as introduced by Hochschild follows a very narrow nexus of emotion and subjectivity. The "commercialization of feeling" within service work, Hochschild claims, results in the workers' alienation of their feelings, and hence their identity, which is envisioned as based on emotions. My argument, however, is that branding conduct—as a governance of both others and the self—is producing forms of self-relation that cannot be separated as pertaining to either a true or false, as it were, commoditized realm of reality. There is literally no outside of market power. For, second, the very production of subjectivity and common sociality is a kind of by-product of the affects instigated at work (Hardt 1999). Even though workers are heavily exploited by capital today, they carry a potential of resistance, of spontaneous outbreaks, which are not profit-oriented.

As in many service jobs in the area of retail and fashion, the affective labor done by employees of *Visibly Hot* implies the training of interactional skills that mobilize emotional proximity with the customer. A common recommendation given by salesclerks is to "treat your client as if he was a friend." In order to approach the customer and close the sale, Carol prefers the so-called technique of *rapport*. In fact, she invited me to read about the topic on the Internet: its procedure refers to the French term *rapport* and literally means to establish a relationship with the customer. According to a Brazilian public education platform, *rapport* is based on three key commands:

> (1) Intention: get to know the other person; (2) Attitude: meet the other person through his world model and validate its 'maps' such as values, beliefs, and individual reality; (3) Frame: move to the perceptual position of the other person (Portal Educação 2013)

The manual recommends both non-verbal (body posture, gestures and breathing) and verbal elements (voice quality, adapting the language to the customer, as for example, by repetition) that help to reach the target. Actually, this is about techniques of acting that put the salesclerk into the

role of a dramaturgic performer (Goffman 1959). His empathy, persuasiveness, as well as his skills of improvisation will decide on whether the customer feels pleased and buys a product.

This acting requires considerable efforts. Carol strives to channel the affective power of her body to establish an emotional proximity to the client that is typically assigned to more intimate relations such as friendships or family. As suggested by the *rapport* manual, she should even go as far as to incorporate the other person's way of feeling. Pedro, one of Carol's teammates, has advanced his selling techniques in this direction. In fact, he mobilizes a series of fantasies that he believes to match with the customer's desires.

> What I say a lot to the guys when the glasses are beautiful—that kind of guy that acts like a boss, you know—you look like a heart-throb! They love it, they die laughing; they like it just because I said this word. ... The people are needy for love. They want to feel good. I use this a lot. For women, sometimes I tell them they are fancy, that they are looking rich, like a celeb chick; they die laughing. (Pedro, salesclerk at *Visibly Hot*)

Pedro identifies that the customers he serves seek affirmation of their looks and handsomeness. Consequently, he meets this need with a procedure that incites manifold imaginations. Firstly, he invokes the character of the stylish womanizer as to be identified by the male customers; equally, he intends to accommodate the female clients with flattery, animating them to experience their own feminine beauty. In both cases, Pedro gets to play with the urge for being sexually attractive to other humans by activating commonly known, binary gender performances. Most strikingly, these allusions (especially those to female beauty) are tied to wealth and fame—stimulating a seductive outbreak that remembers Zola's scenario of *Au Bonheur des Dames:* the all-encompassing aspiration for a better, brighter life. The customer's affirmative reactions ("they die laughing") do finally underline that this promise of material wealth is interlocked with sexual fantasies. According to Pedro, they can be "used," in other words, turned into sales.

The affective labor of salesclerks like Pedro and Carol unleash desires that can easily merge with intimate liaisons. Several salesclerks reported that they have been invited to dates, that they have encountered a girlfriend or boyfriend through their job at the sales point. However, engineering feeling by incentivizing desires is still a risky business. The simultaneity

of excitation and frustration, to use Preciado's (2008) words, imminent in affective labor techniques, can easily backfire on sales. Juliano, another salesclerk at *Visibly Hot*, reported on repeated scenes of failure when heterosexual couples entered the store. His direct supervisor, who he defines as a "pretty girl," was about to cause a scandal when she tried to flirt with the male customer. To state it in a different manner, her affective-sexual selling strategy would trigger a conflict. "The woman got jealous and made her boyfriend leave the store." In this example, seduction lost its effectiveness, indeed suddenly aborted the sale. Thus, affective labor is not an activity with consistent or manageable results. Once the desires are set in motion, they can both excite and disturb the profits.

Limited Freedom, New Controls

The ambivalence of animation and frustration that characterizes the effects of desires propelled through affective labor applies in a certain way also to the condition of many salesclerks at *Visibly Hot*. Although most of them evaluate their employment in positive terms because they appreciate the brand's coolness, its promise of freedom and its party culture, there are very few that last more than one or two years working for the enterprise. On the one hand, the fluctuation of workers may be a structural problem of the retail sector. Employment at *Visibly Hot* offers the same conditions as virtually every other store in the shopping mall, meaning sales jobs paid on a commission basis that reach about two Brazilian minimum salaries at the utmost.[7] Furthermore, these employment tracks offer very few opportunities for advancement within the company. Once the salesclerks get tired of motivating themselves to maintain their selling strategies and promoting the same products, low performance generally results in rapid dismissal. On the other hand, *Visibly Hot* represents a specifically attractive employment option to young people with little formal education and therefore few employment alternatives. It is precisely because it bears a bundle of promises, which draw on self-realization and the "freedom" of diversity, that enthusiasm is widespread among the employees who have recently started the job.

In the case of Pedro, I had the opportunity to meet him twice during my fieldwork. The first time, in 2012, he had recently begun working for *Visibly Hot*. Back then he was excited by the brand and talked about the advantages compared to other fashion companies like C&A, where he used to work before. At *Visibly Hot*, he did not need to wear a uniform

and he could behave in accordance with his own different style. Even the fact that it took him at least three attempts until he finally got accepted for the job could not diminish neither his admiration for nor his identification with the brand. Pedro liked the permissive and easy-going lifestyle. In his account, he expressed a different style by his allusions to U.S. Afro American music and aesthetics, something "quite Brooklyn," as he put it. And his high motivation even made him one of Rio de Janeiro's most awarded salesclerks during months.

When I met Pedro again in 2014, his opinion about *Visibly Hot* had radically changed. He had resigned a couple of months before and was now about to realize performance projects for a community-based NGO in Olaria, his neighborhood in the Northern Zone of Rio de Janeiro. For his formerly idolized enterprise he had only negative feelings left.

> In fact, working in a shop is something very enslaving. Because you turn into a slave of money. It's shit. For example, you have a target. We are five salesclerks. [Imitating his boss.] Guys, we have these premiums here—for the first place, I will give you an extra payment of R$100, for the second place R$30. So, everything makes you work under the rule of money. And, you know, to work in a shop is very ego. You get a very inflated ego. Because, ah, there is a premium here, ah, you are the best vendor, best vendor [Pedro]. So, all that makes you feel better about yourself. Actually, hum, they brainwash you. And, well, this turns you into an empty person. Imagine if you stay at a shop your whole life, you have money, ego, premiums, but you are an empty person. With that—when I was working for [*Visibly Hot*], I got to know a nice crowd, I went clubbing a lot—why? Because you work in the shopping center from Sunday to Sunday, you only want to get wasted. (Pedro, salesclerk at *Visibly Hot*)

For Pedro, the promise to be different has finally taken shape as something that is driven by money (and what even leads him to compare it to slave labor) and that finds its only objective in heightening the salesclerk's self-esteem. In our conversation, he underlined that he got uncomfortable when he realized that he himself was becoming more and more egocentric. For a time, he thought that his work was really cool. Pedro enjoyed knowing the *Visibly Hot* crowd, to spend his money right in the shopping center where he worked, a "very consumerist life." But then he changed his mind. Today, he thinks that the brand's conventions are stupid, because they were only about premiums and they did not transmit any

ideals. Work, Pedro substantiated, should be either enriching for yourself or beneficial for society.

Pedro formulates his own critique of the commodification of the self that is a crucial part of the sales job at *Visibly Hot*. Beyond his delineated critique of the capitalist logic of profit, he shows himself frustrated by the disproportion between how much he invested in this job, and nevertheless, got to a point where he was no longer accepted with the style he had designed for himself. When I reminded him of our first conversation and the fact that he had once highly valued *Visibly Hot* for its open-mindedness toward identities, he specified:

> Open-minded until a certain point. … There came a time when I let grow the beard, I wore ripped trousers; because I think that the real street style is cooler, more beautiful. But then they started to argue with me. Because the beard was a bit longer, my hair also was longer. They said, hey, couldn't you wear a headscarf?! I said no, I don't! This already bothered me, you know. … They also told me to cut the beard. … Sometimes, it was only softer teasing, but they wanted me to adjust myself to the norm [*padrão*]. (Pedro, salesclerk at *Visibly Hot*)

Pedro stated that the negative reactions to his changing visual style even worsened after a while. Some of his teammates had commented that he had an untidy appearance, bad smell and dirty hair. He felt injured, especially by such comments from his direct supervisor, to whose sales success he thought he had contributed significantly. The critique Pedro outlines here about the logics of monetary profit begins to turn into an open critique of Visibly Hot's diversity politics. "They tell you a lot of marvelous stories when you get there, but they are actually not that open-minded." This also was the case with respect to sexuality. At his sales point, Pedro said, "there were always a lot of gays." And at some point, the team leader commented that it was getting too much, that it could not turn into such a "colorful, lesbian thing." Pedro reacted outraged to his team leader's directives. "There is a moment when the masks fall down," he cynically denoted. He now thought that most of his colleagues at *Visibly Hot* were conformists and had even agreed to segregation. "Two years in the company, and then there is someone who tells me that the place was getting too colorful! And what if I am gay?" Pedro also gave an example of how supervisors and team leaders tried to instruct Enilson, one of his sales colleagues.

> There was this guy, Enilson. He was very faggot, very gay, very queen. He was selling [sunglasses] like hot cakes. But then the shop manager told him to take care when he was attending to men. Because these men may not like it. (Pedro, salesclerk at *Visibly Hot*)

"But so what?" Pedro asked himself. If the customer knew that Visibly Hot was a company in which a lot of salesclerks were crazy, that it was a "shop with faggots," he ought to adapt himself, and not the other way round.

The restrictions Pedro and some of his teammates encountered are pointing to the limits of *Visibly Hot*'s promises for "different" lifestyles and emancipation. A critical perspective on the commodification of selves and desires is here more than the entitlement to ask whether the brand's diversity management is mere rhetoric, a somewhat "genius trick," as some feminist critiques argue, of combining the promise for more justice and inclusion with the guarantee for more sales (Purtschert 2007, 91). On the one hand, *Visibly Hot* is mobilizing "different" subjects: young people who bear the prospect of offering a kind of affective break from the monotony of everyday life to the customer public. But on the other hand, it polices the borders of how "different" these young people can present themselves. For it must be a notion of diversity that can securely be consumed, celebrated and result in surplus, to use Sara Ahmed's terms, it must function as a "feel good" politics (Ahmed 2012, 69). Salesclerks who are troubling the heteronormative order too much or whose body styling is too experimental are apparently disturbing because they could eventually affect customers in critical ways, causing "bad" feelings.

Pedro's experience further concerns the way in which his self-commodification as a part of the affective labor shifted from initial enthusiasm to frustration. Strikingly, it is not an estranging process like Hochschild's notion of emotional labor would suggest. Since the *Visibly Hot* salesclerks identify with the brand with respect to their aspired, own and "different" personality, they would neither expect nor want to give up this identity after work. What they are rather longing for is social recognition of their own lifestyle—possibly, also their targeted sexual or racial identity—and this is something they intrinsically expect from and through the brand. It is this "win-win" situation that the enterprise promotes but does not necessarily ensure. In the sequences of affective labor I analyzed here, personal desires—to be "different"—are enmeshed with market incitements, to the extent that life unfolds within them. It lies thus in

the exploitation of concrete life stages and states of feeling—like those of Carol or Pedro—that the capitalist endeavor can be so successful. And yet, frustration as well as the experience that the brand does not deliver what it promises are provoking measurable resistance, critique and flight.

Conclusion

The affective landscape as shaped by *Visibly Hot* refers to subtle forms of market control, in which young people's desires are made use of in order to guarantee economic surplus. Its regulating instruments, namely branding and diversity management, continuously engineer particular, supposedly emancipatory understandings of sexual and racial difference that promote enthusiasm among its employees. For most of the company's sales staff, working for *Visibly Hot* means having to mobilize subjectivity. On the one hand, this affective labor demands a molding of their selves, the performance of an "attitude" that coincides with the feeling of an authentic personality. On the other hand, desires also play a role in direct sales strategies: salesclerks are training and creating peculiar techniques such as the communication of sexual fantasies or spontaneous flirts with the customers. Although most of the salesclerks are evaluating their job in positive terms, my research has found that their enthusiasm for the brand is limited to one or two years of employment. As in the case of Pedro, frustration derives from *Visibly Hot*'s normative enclosure of how "different" one's style or sexuality finally could be, but also from the ways in which worker selves are inexorably subjected to the logics of sales.

Notes

1. My special thanks go to Barbara Umrath and Kaciano Gadelha for their productive commentaries on an earlier version of this text, as well as to Gabriel Alencar Reichenheim for his essential proofreading.
2. Due to copyright concerns, the enterprise's name has been changed. Furthermore, evidence has equally been covered in order to guarantee the anonymity of individuals who were interviewed for this study. Consequently, the web sources that have been consulted, for example, YouTube and Facebook, will not be indicated.
3. The original term *sexuell arbeiten*, in German, could be more precisely translated as "working sexually," a term that would

possibly prevent common misunderstandings given the closeness to sex work. However, sexual labor is the term the authors are explicitly using in their English texts. As a part of their project "queering work," Lorenz and Kuster are strategically concerned with highlighting the role of heterosexuality in common work relations.

4. Antunes and Druck (2013) point to a couple of factors, which determine the deep transformation within production and wage labor in Brazil in the recent decades. Above the increased demands with respect to workers' flexibility and cognitive skills, the authors identify widespread *terceirização* (outsourcing) as the country's most devastating changes away from Fordist cycles of production and contracting. It is estimated that about one quarter of all formal wage laborers today are employed under such outsourced conditions. This entrepreneurial withdrawal from social security benefits and workers' rights could then also be described as one of the modes of neoliberal technologies, which unfold in geographically deterritorialized, but globally assembled spaces and logics (Ong 2007). Following Antunes and Druck (2013, 221), the main vector of *terceirização* appears as a transfer of responsibility from the enterprise to the individual worker.
5. When Marco Feliciano, evangelical pastor and federal deputy, was elected president of the Commission for Human Rights and Minorities in March 2013, several social movements and civil rights organizations began to protest against his openly homophobic and racist speeches. When he made attempts to demand psychological treatment for homo- and transsexuals, phrases like "Feliciano, who is gonna work at *Visibly Hot* after your treatments?" rapidly spread in social media.
6. Radin (1992, 178) comments this contemporary dilemma with the following sentence: "In that world it may sometimes be better to commodify incompletely than not to commodify at all."
7. As of the beginning of 2015, the Brazilian state defined the actual *salário mínimo* (minimum wage) as R$788 per month (http://www.guiatrabalhista.com.br/guia/salario_minimo.htm, accessed January 21, 2015), which equals US$209 (November 8, 2015).

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CHAPTER 4

Emotional Labor and Ethical Practice: Professionalism Among Sex Workers in Tijuana

Susanne Hofmann

Introduction

When I was researching the sex industry in the Mexican border city of Tijuana,[1] it became clear that those who worked in the bars and clubs of the city's red light district provided much more to clients than "just" sex. The process of selecting a sex worker for the provision of sexual services could be a fairly extended one, during which clients expected women "to party" with them. They would buy them drinks and expect them "to be fun" and "have fun" with them, engaging in animated conversation, flirtation and jokey banter. The interviews I conducted in Tijuana confirmed my observation that the sex workers relied on finely tuned affective skills to produce the desired (and profitable) customer response, as well as the management of their own feelings. Entertaining clients, making them feel attractive and good about themselves and laughing at their jokes made up a significant proportion of their work.

Noting that sex work can entail emotional labor is not new to sex work research. A series of scholars have explored Arlie Hochschild's concept of emotional labor in the context of sex work (Brents et al. 2010; Brewis and Linstead 2000; Cabezas 2009; Chapkis 1997; Frank 2002; Høigård and

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Finstad 1992; Kong 2006; Morcillo 2014; Pasko 2002; Sanders 2005; Wood 2000). In *The Managed Heart*, Hochschild defines as "emotion work" the process of managing our feelings and emotions in the private sphere, reserving "emotional labor" for when individuals aim to "create a publicly observable facial and bodily display" (Hochschild 1983, 7) to be sold for a wage. Interested in exploring the costs of emotional labor, Hochschild scrutinizes the effects of the "commercialization of human feeling" among airline flight attendants. She asserts that the task of "managing an estrangement between self and feeling and between self and display" constitutes "a source of stress" (Hochschild 1983, 131). She concludes that when feelings are "used as instruments" (Hochschild 1983, 136) in the context of wage labor, there are negative consequences for the worker: emotional laborers "can become estranged or alienated from an aspect of self"—from their feelings. Foundational to Hochschild's analysis of the commercialization of feelings are notions such as the existence of a "true self," and the "authenticity" of feelings.

Unlike Hochschild, I am not concerned with "authentic" or "inauthentic" emotions being performed as part of sex work. Rather, I take the view that emotions are always already a product of socialization, they do not precede or stand outside of culture (Lutz 1986). Therefore, they must be understood as malleable and constantly evolving, and any assessment of the meaning and use of emotions must be understood in relation to the social and cultural context in which they emerge. However, I do consider some aspects of Hochschild's analysis as highly relevant to a feminist understanding of emotional labor, and I share her concern about the interventions being made into "feeling cultures." First, while other scholars had already drawn attention to the ways in which "personal or even intimate traits of the employee are drawn into the sphere of exchange" (Mills 1951, 182), Hochschild was the first to stress a sense of "*active* emotional labor," which requires effort from the individual rather than being something that naturally occurs. Subsequently, her analysis emphasizes this "*active* emotional labor" as a skillful activity which produces value. Second, Hochschild recognizes that even though emotion work—traditionally privatized and feminized—is now being strategically used for value production, it is still not generally recognized or valued as labor (i.e. not assigned a price or monetary value), but remains naturalized (i.e. assumed as a natural quality of persons), and women still constitute the majority of the workforce in professions that require the performance of emotional labor.[2] Hochschild's analysis indicates that emotional labor

constitutes (unpaid) extra work for employees, which constitutes an unfair intensification of labor. Third, I share a more general concern implicit in Hochschild's work about the changes of emotion cultures; about who is being served by those transformations, and which actors are able to instigate and define those transformations. This chapter will emphasize the relevance of self-determination, control and appropriation of the additional value accrued from emotional labor in a sex work context. I consider the kinds of emotional labor that sex workers in Tijuana perform, as well as women's views on the strains this gives rise to, in dialogue with Hochschild's notion of emotional labor as estrangement.

Sex Work and Emotional Labor

The kinds of emotional display linked to physical intimacy that are normally part of the unpaid emotion work done by women to sustain private relationships (such as signs of arousal and flirtation) are performed by sex workers as part of a sexual service (Lever and Dolnick 2010). Sex work involves the commercial manipulation of workers' emotions to produce and evoke feelings in customers (Cabezas 2009). With emotional labor, sex workers feign interest, make customers feel cared about, give them attention, and make them feel attractive and comfortable. Evoking such feelings in customers functions as an entrepreneurial strategy used to increase clients' spending and return visits (Morcillo 2014; Sanders 2005).

Sex is often understood to be the "most intimate" way of forging interpersonal connections and therefore considered to be a marker for the authentic self. Selling sex has been described as "selling the self" (Pateman 1988)—alienation of the unalienable—and commercial sex has been condemned not only as objectifying and "using" another person's body, but also as "abusing" their feelings. Høigård and Finstad (1992, 110) contend that one's feelings are not only transformed, but "destroyed" in the process of selling sex, and that a sex worker's "entire emotional life is attacked." Chapkis (1997) finds that the conceptualization of sex as inalienable pathologizes sex workers who have successfully distanced themselves from their work and thereby negates their professional pride. She contests the idea that feelings are inevitably damaged as a result of sex work, and contends that the commodification of emotion does not necessarily lead to these negative effects (Chapkis 1997, 80).

A great deal of the literature that explores emotional labor in sex work talks about emotional labor as a strategy for achieving psychological

security and separating the self from the experience of commercial sex work (Brewis and Linstead 2000; Day 2007; O'Neill 2001; Phoenix 2000). Many scholars have interpreted emotional dissociation in sex work as a psychological protection strategy for "damage limitation," which is considered necessary because prostitution is allegedly a consumption activity that leaves the body in an ambiguous state of commodification, and the individual sex worker therefore risks the consumption of her self-identity together with her sale of sex (Brewis and Linstead 2000, 209). However, other scholars have found that dissociation, or emotional distancing, the ability to separate feelings from the self, is required to continue to do the work well, hence, it is considered a positive sign of professionalism by many sex workers (Vanwesenbeeck 2005). Additionally, the creation of a work persona can serve to protect the individual by allowing the person to employ techniques of boundary maintenance, as well as allowing a sense of control (Chapkis 1997; Sanders 2005).

Sanders (2005, 328) grasps this separating of the "personal self" from the "work self" with the concept of "manufactured identity." She finds that most indoor sex workers generate manufactured identities, which have a significant bearing on the degree to which women are successful in their business and able to minimize psychological strain at work (ibid.). According to Sanders, a manufactured identity is constructed for two main reasons; firstly, to protect individuals from negative repercussions, and secondly, as a business strategy. For Sanders, creating a manufactured identity is a combination of both sexual labor and "deep" emotion work, or what Hochschild (1983, 10) defines as "deep acting," which is the practice of altering one's feelings to match the emotion expressions that a work situation requires. In Sanders' (2005, 328) study, the creation of a separate character was part of a business strategy that sex workers developed, which allowed them to better perform the "prostitute role." Sanders also highlights that a manufactured identity can be understood as an example of a resistance strategy that enables sex workers to control the workplace. However, she emphasizes that this is not an option for all sex workers, but depends on a specific set of circumstances: "The ability to create a manufactured identity depends on the individual's personal biography, her experience of the sex trade and the location of her work [indoors or outdoors]" (Sanders 2005, 337). Factors such as drug use, coercive relations, racialized boundaries, poor education and the lack of access to material resources such as housing and technology render sex work environments precarious and make women vulnerable to occupational risks,

complicating the formation of a manufactured identity (Sanders 2005). Furthermore, Morcillo (2014) found that not all women are willing to provide emotional labor as part of sex work. Some of his interviewees considered emotional labor as something that inconvenienced them, its only effect being to waste time and defer sexual contact. Those women took the stigma of being considered "cold," due to refusing to "perform romance" as part of sex work, with pride (Morcillo 2014, 47).

For Lever and Dolnick (2010, 86) sex workers sell an "illusion of intimacy." In their opinion, there are plenty of other professions engaged in the commercialization of intimacy, such as psychotherapy and therapeutic massage. They also include "listening occupations" such as barbers, hairstylists, manicurists and bartenders in the category of emotional laborers (ibid). However, the emotional labor, involved in creating and keeping alive an illusion, is something the authors consider specific to the work of call girls. The client is the buyer of a fantasy and thus absolved from any responsibility to reciprocate displays of intimacy to the call girl; intimacy is constituent part of the call girl's work. Lever and Dolnick find that too little is known still about the negative psychological consequences of emotional labor in the context of sex work, and suggest that "more research on the emotional dimensions of sex work would heighten the appreciation of the many interpersonal skills required in this occupation" (Lever and Dolnick 2010, 100).

Kong (2006) also engages with the question of how far the emotional labor in sex work is comparable to other professions that involve emotional skills. On the one hand, he acknowledges the similarity between sex workers and other kinds of emotional laborers, such as flight attendants, nurses or sales representatives, all of whom have to monitor and control their emotional behavior, provide appropriate care, support and counseling, define working boundaries and engage in the presentation of a self that is appropriate for the interaction, regardless of their true emotional reactions in the moment (Kong 2006). On the other hand, however, Kong considers sex workers as significantly different from all of these, not because they are involved in selling emotions along with sexual services, but because selling sex is a stigmatized type of work. For Kong (2006, 423), its difference from "conventional" emotional labor (i.e. that does not include the use of one's intimate body parts) lies in the "whole emotional cost and labor attached to managing the stigma and to crafting an identity that marks the prostitute off from other emotional laborers." Sanders (2005, 330) agrees with Kong, emphasizing that the emotional labor involved in

sex work is "a tool for managing the negative consequences of engaging in sexual physical and emotional labor that is publicly condemned and generates private dilemmas."

Certain more recent studies have been concerned with developing new approaches to emotional or affective labor that break away from Hochschild's bifurcated notion of emotional labor (Brents and Hausbeck 2007; Brents et al. 2010; Cabezas 2006, 2009). Cabezas (2006) contends that it is impossible to draw a clear-cut line between private and public emotions (the latter understood as used commercially), and neither is it so clear that emotional labor provided in the realm of work always involves negative consequences. Instead of this divide between private, authentic emotions (read as good) versus public, performed manufactured intimacy (read as bad), she suggests that emotional laborers break down boundaries between themselves and customers, ultimately in order to appropriate the personalized dynamics of their work for their own ends (Cabezas 2006). Businesses certainly attempt to make profit from the workers' personalized interactions (offering upscale and value-added services in their venues), yet Cabezas assumes that workers still manage to turn personalized interactions in these workplaces (involving significant levels of emotional labor) to their advantage.

Brents et al. (2010) bring their analysis of the emotional labor in sex work into dialogue with a post-Marxist critique of immaterial labor[3] (Dowling 2007; Hardt and Negri 2000; Lazzarato 1996; Weeks 2007; Wissinger 2007). The authors assert that "the cultural and economic changes driven by global capitalism have created a consumption-driven, service-based economy that increasingly sells human interactions and emotional exchanges. The sale of personal service, leisure, spectacle, and tourism places more and more components of human relationships onto the market" (Brents et al. 2010, 9). Hence, performances of intimacy and connection are increasingly part of labor in the mainstream leisure economy. Similarly, Viviana Zelizer (2005) in her exemplary book *The Purchase of Intimacy* points out that while money and intimacy are often thought of as separate realms in Western societies, the two are intertwined in complicated ways. Interpersonal connections enter into the production, distribution, consumption and transfer of economic value, and prices, exchanges and forms of instrumental reasoning have long entered our private worlds (Zelizer 2005). Service workers perform prescribed emotions every day, as well as evoke emotions in customers, negotiating issues of authenticity in exchange as their very identities become interfered with and transformed.

Research shows that salespeople and service workers are becoming increasingly adept at managing multiple, flexible presentations of their selves to meet customer expectations (Holyfield 1999; Sharpe 2005). In a comparison of the Nevada and UK sex industries, Brents and Sanders (2010) find that changes in attitudes and culture have led to more consumers accepting the consumption of intimacy as a legitimate market transaction. The authors claim that beyond people's sexualized bodies, late capitalist service industries have appropriated also their personal and emotional capacities in order to create corporate profits (Brents and Sanders 2010). This convergence of the public and private sphere, in which all kinds of human interactions can be exchanged in the marketplace, raises new questions for scholars of contemporary capitalist sex work. The question now is not whether emotional labor alienates us from our "real" or "authentic" selves, but what influence workers have on the transformation of emotion cultures, and to what degree can they appropriate the additional value accrued from their emotional labor.

Selling the "Girlfriend Experience" or *Onda Novia*

More comprehensive sexual-affective services provided by sex workers have been termed "girlfriend experience," or "GFE," in the English-speaking sex work literature (Bernstein 2007; Milrod and Weitzer 2012). A GFE refers to a sexual and social experience with a sex worker that extends brief sex acts (Sanders 2008a). It involves a diversification of the physical activities performed beyond the sexual act, to include kissing, caressing and other sensual acts. Essential, however, to the performance of a meaningful personal relationship is the engendering of emotional intimacy through expressions of emotionality, care, desire, attention and companionship. In the Latin American context, the term *onda novia* (girlfriend vibe) has been used to describe the performance of a mix of corporeal and affective activities that include the performance of affection, romance and erotics (Morcillo 2014, 46).

Like any other commercially packaged leisure activity, intimacy is readily available for a price. However, sex workers provide this extended physical and emotional service to act "as if" they were their clients' girlfriend for a determined time period only. Instead of comparing the provision of commercial intimacy with dating, conventional relationships or marital models, Elizabeth Bernstein (2007, 103) has coined the term "bounded authenticity," which encompasses the professional provision of "authentic

emotional and physical connection" that is genuine, but limited by both time constraints and the fact that the benefits are purchased—not given free of charge. While the provision of emotional intimacy as part of sex work is not a new phenomenon, given the historic recreational and affective aspects of brothel and courtesan prostitution, some scholars argue that the exchange of emotional intimacy is predominant in the higher strata of the sexual market and has recently expanded in indoor prostitution (Bernstein 2007; Lever and Dolnick 2010; Sanders 2008b). Morcillo (2014), researching sex work in the Argentinian cities of Córdoba and Buenos Aires, found that even though escorts emphasized that emotional labor was key to their service, it was not exclusive to either indoor sex work or escort work. He did uncover, however, that street sex workers attributed a different meaning to emotional labor: while the provision of emotional labor helped escorts to generate a *buen ambiente* (good atmosphere), street sex workers considered it "mere pretense" (Morcillo 2014, 47).

In the *Zona Norte*, Tijuana's red light district, *ficheras*[4] are the sex workers most involved in emotional labor. *Ficheras* sit for hours with clients at small tables, sometimes on their laps, but most frequently next to clients who may place their arm around their shoulders. Clients buy them drinks for seven dollars each, of which *ficheras* earn half. These women's job is to drink and talk, smile and express amusement at the clients' stories and jokes. I saw that clients often bought roses for the *ficheras*, and *chelas* (big bottles of beer) for themselves. Observing *ficheras* at work still puzzled me even after numerous nightly visits of the red light district, since the experience they feign is so surprisingly similar to the image of a newly enamored couple going out, having a romantic evening together. Once I saw a woman play around with the rose a client had bought for her, teasing and tickling him with it in a playful way. The interactions between clients and *ficheras* were generally structured in a very gender-stereotypical way: clients paid for women's "amusement," purchasing drinks, flowers, cigarettes, chewing gums, nuts and other items that they liked from the numerous hawkers popping into the bars with their products.

The provision of emotional intimacy—an essential element of the girlfriend experience or *onda novia* performance—demands highly elaborate interpersonal and emotional skills and the management of one's own feelings. Hochschild (1983, 33) identifies two main strands of emotional labor that workers perform in professional environments, one of which she calls "surface acting," which means to disguise what we feel, or to pretend to feel what we do not by changing how we outwardly appear. Through

surface acting, however, we "deceive others about what we really feel, but we do not deceive ourselves" (Hochschild 1983, 33). Professional emotion management is not restricted to the elimination of undesired emotions or the feigning of emotions that mobilize a positive customer response. The second strand of emotional labor Hochschild calls "deep acting," whereby the worker self-induces the feeling that is required in the workplace. Deep acting makes "feigning easy by making it unnecessary" (ibid.). It is a practice through which individuals deceive themselves as much as others. As a consequence of deep acting, the display of the feeling then comes as a natural result of working on the feeling. While both practices constitute interventions into the individual's emotions, deep acting practices have a transformative effect on the doer: they create the inner shape of a feeling.

Hochschild was driven by a concern about what happens to the way a person relates to her feelings or to her face when deep and surface acting are forms of labor to be sold, and when private capacities for empathy and warmth are put to corporate use. She asserts that "a separation of display and feeling is hard to keep up over long periods," and that "maintaining a difference between feeling and feigning over the long run leads to strain" (Hochschild 1983, 90). Individuals then try to reduce the strain by pulling feeling and feigning closer together, either by changing what they feel or by changing what they feign. Hochschild concludes that "when display is required by the job, it is usually feeling that has to change; and when conditions estrange us from our face, they sometimes estrange us from feeling as well" (ibid.).

Sex Work, Emotion Management and Capitalism

A range of authors inspired by post-Marxist work and interested in understanding the specificity of labor forms in the immaterial mode have diagnosed a shift in capitalist value creation, claiming that in contemporary capitalism it is no longer a person's physical or intellectual work alone that creates value, but that increasingly intimate and personal traits and capacities are being integrated into the process of value creation which then becomes appropriated by capitalist corporations (Hardt and Negri 2000; Lazzarato 1996; Lemke et al. 2000). For post-Marxist theorists, affective labor[5] constitutes one aspect of the wider category of immaterial labor. Affective labor is a form of labor that mobilizes affects in both the service worker and the customer, and it is always directed

toward constructing a relationship for the production of value. It can be performed either through actual or virtual human contact or interaction, which produce "intangible feelings of ease, excitement, or passion" (Hardt and Negri 2000, 293). However, these newly commodified intimate and affective human capacities are not being appropriated in a gender-neutral way. Andrea Bührmann (2005) emphasizes that capitalist integration of intimate capacities focuses on women's assumed strengths in care work and emotional work. In their collection *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy*, Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Hochschild (2002, 22–23) have suggested that "love and care become the new gold," namely a resource that cannot only be artificially created, but also "displaced or redirected" as desired. In a similar vein, Maurizio Lazzarato (1996) indicates that immaterial labor has become one of the highest value-producing forms of labor in late capitalism.

In sex work, emotional and affective labor has probably always existed to some degree. However, some authors have noted an intensification that came along with an increased diversification of sex work, in particular within specialized niche markets (Bernstein 2007), such as elite escort or call girl services (Lever and Dolnick 2010), and with the heightened global competition among sex workers resulting from greater client mobility (thanks to affordable flights and package tours to popular sex tourism locations). The sex industry aspires to provide an environment of relaxation, enjoyment and amusement for its clients, demanding from its workforce that they manage their emotions accordingly. Negative emotions have no place in this professional leisure environment, so workers must not trouble clients with such displays. Amaya, a Mexican sex worker, told me about her personal rules regarding emotion management and her expectations of her colleagues at work:

> I do not work for instance, if I don't feel well. If I start working and I realize that I feel in a serious mood and don't like approaching men, I go home. There are girls who don't give a shit and always approach men no matter what. They are the desperate ones who offer themselves to men at all times, hoping they will be picked up.

Amaya does not approve of women hustling men despite being in a bad mood. She told me that she considers this harmful and damaging for the

entire social environment. Instead, she expects a colleague to withdraw from the workplace when she is not able to control her feelings. Amaya has developed a strong sense of professional ethics of sex work, a discourse that presumes that emotions can and should be rationally mastered. However, this notion that the mind or willpower is able to override emotions is a relatively new one. Catherine Lutz (1986) points out that scholars previously considered emotions as an authentic part of the self, and emotional expressions were ascribed a signal function that served to protect the individual. Furthermore, past scholars emphasized the chaotic energy of emotions: emotions were thought of as unintended, disorderly and uncontrollable. In more recent times, human beings have been assumed to have a choice in how they deal with their emotions, and the notion that emotions can be directed, or managed has become popularized (Bolton 2009; Du Gay and Salaman 1992; Payne and Cooper 2001; Tyler 2004; Voronov and Vince 2012). For the social theorist Nikolas Rose, emotion management forms part of a powerful and disciplining discourse of self-improvement, self-transformation or self-making which has become a global cultural imperative (Rose 1996, 1999).

Sociologist Renate Salecl, who examined the rise of choice discourses after the fall of socialism in Eastern Europe, has pointed out that these ideas are closely linked to the very perception of the self that dominates neoliberal capitalism (Salecl 2004). What she calls the "ideology of the late capitalist self" (Salecl 2004, 1152) includes strong demands on individuals' emotion management in the workplace. Devoid of any social protections, individuals are called upon to become self-entrepreneurs, who are able to manage their emotions in particular ways, with negative emotions such as anger being especially vilified (Ehrenreich 2009). Salecl noticed that publications on "anger management" and ways to control and repress negative emotions began to mushroom throughout Eastern Europe in parallel with the embrace of capitalism after the dissolution of the Soviet bloc. Personal feelings must be controlled, in order not to interrupt the market exchange, and people are considered individually responsible for managing their emotions in a way that guarantees maximum productivity in the workplace. In contemporary capitalism, emotion management imperatives and emotion display rules make gendered, racialized and classed appeals to different workers. In the following, I will elaborate how and why sex workers adopt, utilize, modify and challenge contemporary emotion management discourses.

Managing Negative Emotions

The emotion management skills required in sex work are learnt on the job, through practice, observation and talk between sex workers. Rambo Ronai's (1992) introspective auto-ethnography as a stripper is an outstanding example for the emotional strategies that women develop in order to deal with the diverging feelings that may emerge during sex work. The emotional strategies that she develops in the course of her work include distancing herself from the present through imagination, focusing on non-sexual body parts of a client which arouses feelings of disgust (e.g. by staring at his eye brows), attempting to maintain facial control, and establishing a mental map of her body, divided into an inside and an outside, whereby the inside is not accessible to the client. However, Rambo Ronai's (1992) self-reflections reveal that time and again clients manage to get through her mental and emotional defenses, and consequently her anger rises in the course of dancing. She describes the elaborate strategies that she has developed to calm herself down, by focusing on the bodily activity of dancing. By being totally enmeshed in sound and movement, she manages to detach herself from the present and is able to be herself again.[6]

Rambo Ronai also describes how high expectations of emotion control are pitched among strippers. Her sex worker colleagues demand that everyone should control their negative emotions so that customers feel they are in a friendly and convivial setting (Rambo Ronai 1992). Women who do not manage to control their outward display of emotion are thought of as failing to adequately fulfill their role as sex worker, and are blamed for any problems that arise in the course of their work. There was no sympathy from colleagues if a woman was treated badly by a client, since it was assumed that she knew what she was getting into when picking the job. Rambo Ronai's colleagues expected everyone to be able to use appropriate emotion management to cope with issues such as sexism, misogynistic talk and the crossing of personal boundaries that can arise during sex work. Some women I interviewed expressed similar demands with regard to the management of negative emotions, as Alina emphasizes here:

> You have to have a nice appearance, be positive and smile. It is logical that you will attract people with your good vibe and be successful and surrounded by clients. But if you are grumpy, you will be left in the corner and no one will approach you.

Alina places responsibility for bad temper on the individual sex worker, and blames her for not managing her feelings successfully. In conversation with me, she expressed the view that sex workers should not continue to work if they are in a bad mood, since their interactions will be unsuccessful and they will spoil the environment for colleagues, passing on their bad vibes. She does not relate the bad mood or negative emotions of individual sex workers analytically to the context in which the experience arises. Alina's narrative entails a strong demand that negative feelings be kept outside of the professional sex work environment, and appeals to the individual to deal with those emotions on her own.

Several sex workers spoke about sex work making them "angry" or "angry and bored," or "angry and tired." One woman, Sonia, said she was "angry about everything." In her practice of sex work she had nevertheless found a way of managing this recurrent emotion:

> I have now found this place [a bar] to work in, and it is better than being enclosed and bored [she had been in mental health care]. I have fun here at night and sometimes stay to dance a little. When I get angry, I leave.

Like most other sex workers I spoke to, she did not relate further details of her anger or her management of it. However, leaving the space where the anger arose was one very common strategy of women for dealing with problematic situations or the potential involvement in emotionally straining situations, such as conflicts with clients, as Elisabeth recalls:

> There were incidents of violence when the people were very drunk. This is precisely why I stick to myself. I see when they start to flirt, and this is when I decide to go outside or go to the toilet. As soon as I assume the problem has passed, I come back out.

Elisabeth has developed a strategy to deal with her emotions, such as fear of an imminent conflict with a drunk client, or insecurity about whether she can handle a client's advances in a particular situation. She finds the easiest way to escape confrontations and possibly violent conflicts in her workplace is exiting the space where the problem occurs. Both women describe the two essential aspects of their management of negative emotions: firstly, withdrawal from the scene prompting the negative feelings (anger or fear), thereby cutting off the source of their negative emotions, and secondly, managing their feelings (through elimination or

suppression) in solitude in a safe space. Women's management of their negative emotions is strategic and astute. They have adapted their emotion management to the professional service work environment they operate in, which does not permit extreme emotional outbursts or frequent complaints about clients' behavior.

Achieving Calmness

The restrooms of the sex establishments I visited in Tijuana's red light district were often comforting refuges, where women met, rested, chatted and refreshed themselves and their make-up. There were plenty of mirrors and shelves, where women stored their make-up pouches, paper towels and perfumes. The more exclusive venues had make-up available to all, such as eyeliners, mascara and fake eyelashes, possibly left over or forgotten by previous users. Restrooms in sex establishments can be pleasant places to chill out, emotionally recover and regain strength and courage for the next round of service work. They are women-only spaces where for a little while workers were able to distance themselves from the bustle, noise, clients and demanding work.

While emotion management generally played a crucial role in the narratives of those I interviewed, particular importance was given to achieving a state of calmness. Many women described themselves to me as "very calm" and "peaceful" and concluded that it was due to their capacity to maintain or achieve calmness that they did not have any problems with people at work. Paulina describes herself:

> I am very calm. I don't mess with anyone. I only chat. This is probably because I have been educated. There are women here who like drugs, they get drunk every day, later they hit you with a bottle. This is where the conflicts start.

Paulina's being-in-control is what she feels makes hers a success story. In her view, it is because she is able to control her emotions, passions and likings that she is able to stay out of trouble, and why those who give way to their proclivities are doomed to fail in the sex industry. In this narrative, education functions as a possible explanation for the achievement of self-control and appropriate emotion management, as well as the attainment of the calmness that forms a crucial element for successful sex work.

From a management perspective, the desire to have calm workers who suppress their negative feelings toward clients seems logical. Workers who fail to control and direct their emotions toward a friendly and comforting calmness that puts clients at ease attract fewer customers and are thus less profitable for venue managers. However, maintaining the calm state required by sex club management throughout the daily realities of sex work can be a difficult task. Leonora explained how sometimes her club's security staff take sides with clients who behave badly, rather than with her. She says, "We have to put up with this, well then, I push myself. And they say, 'It is ok. Let him go. If he does it another time then we will throw him out.'" From the perspective of a sex establishment owner, a badly behaved client might be better than none on a quiet day, and some managers show little concern for their workers' needs as long as clients continue to consume and pay up. Not all staff members care to intervene when clients assault women; first because sex workers in Tijuana are considered freelance contractors (not employees) by waiting staff and managers, and second, because clients' tips constitute a significant part of waiters' wages.

Dealing with Abusive Behavior

Several of the Tijuana sex workers shared their experiences of verbal or physical assault by clients and their ways of handling it. Rosalía's account illustrates another dimension of emotional labor with her capacity to understand the abusive client's behavior from his own perspective: "I think it depends on how one treats people. It is the same with everything. Even without wanting, you sometimes step on people." Rosalía considered the ability to assume the other's point of view—including in relation to abusive behavior—an indispensable skill in sex work:

> I would say, "Sorry," and "Why are you being so naughty?" This is how you have to treat people. With the client it is the same. If you treat him well, he will come back, once or twice. When I see he is violent, I will not take him on. I will try to calm him down, as much as possible, and get him thrown out as soon as I can. It is not about who was right. There is no point in setting up fronts. If we do so one of us will start a fight. There's no need to get to extremes.

What Rosalía suggests demands a great deal of herself and other sex workers. She recommends putting aside one's primary reaction to abusive or violent behavior, the immediate defense and protection of the self. Instead, Rosalía demands the ability from herself to understand the assailant's perspective. She considers her attitude toward the positive and calm treatment of the client her most effective means for resolving a conflict situation. Rosalía also considers the possibility that she may be the cause of the conflict and hence the client's violent reaction, cautioning herself not to assume a self-righteous position. Furthermore, her professional emotion management strategy entails never confronting an assailant directly, nor claiming that she is in the right (even if she thinks that she is). Rosalía's narrative reflects the highly demanding nature of her emotional labor, which requires conflict management skills and high levels of self-restraint and self-control. What she describes here is the ability to temporarily erase the immediate responses and requirements of the self which is being maltreated, and replace them with a vision of the needs of the (violent) other. She demands a strategic, temporary annihilation of the needs of the worker's self in order to manage the situation.

As the interview extracts demonstrate, sex work can involve significant emotional labor. As well as performing the happy, good-humored, pleasant and affirmative companion, women in Tijuana's sex industry must control their emotions, in particular negative ones, to the point of suppressing the survival instinct of self-defense against harassment or violence. Additionally, they have to be good listeners and appear to approve of what is being said. This can become difficult when the content of the talk offends them or slights women in general. Serena's narrative drew attention to the fact that many clients engage at length in talk that belittles or degrades their wives. She said:

> Clients tell a lot of lies. Men will never tell you that their wife is a good person, that she is a good mother and a good wife. They will always say that she treats them poorly, that she is a bitch and this and that. They always talk in a bad way about their wives. They always complain. They never say what *they* [the men] do, they say *the woman* does this to me, she is bad, she treats me badly, she treats my children in a bad way, she does not cook, she does not clean [laughs]—they always complain about everything.

Some clients turn sex workers into the confidential associates of calumnious monologues about their partners or wives. What impact do

such misogynous verbal outbursts have on sex workers? Some might be able to ignore this kind of sexist talk, because they are not themselves the objects of the degradation, or they might not identify with the American middle-class women who are likely to be the majority of their clients' wives. However, they too are women and often wives or partners of men.

A psychological study on the impact of sexism found that women who experienced one to two sexist incidents per week, consisting of traditional gender-role stereotyping or demeaning comments and behaviors, experienced reduced psychological well-being through discomfort, feelings of anger and depression or decreased self-esteem (Swim et al. 2001). Like other service workers, sex workers must find ways of dealing with the prejudicial treatment that comes with their job, including the behavioral limitations that this implies. The Mexican sex workers I spoke to made clear that earnings were key to their willingness to put up with sexist abuse and manage resulting emotions. Additionally, they stressed their determination to use their earnings to achieve their personal ambitions; and holding in sight their long-term motivations spurred them to endure the emotional strains experienced in the present.

Emotional Labor and Estrangement

Arlie Hochschild (1983) notes that self-estrangement and feelings of inauthenticity are likely to occur when displayed feelings have to depart repeatedly from inner feelings. Most women I talked to were highly self-reflexive and thoughtful with respect to the nature of their work, their self-perception as sex workers and the opportunities their work offered them. Very noticeably, those working in the bars and clubs of the *Zona Norte* had adopted a professional approach in their thinking and feeling about sex work, as Paula's narrative demonstrates:

> Our work is very tiring. If I am not in a good mood, it's better I don't go downstairs [to the club]. There is no point. Why would I go downstairs and treat the client badly? It is our job to go around smiling at all times, because they come in order to relieve their stress and we should not put ours on them.

Paula is a sex worker, but also the partner of a manager and instructor of newly arrived women, whom she introduces to the establishment's norms,

expectations and house rules. As many other sex workers in the *Zona Norte*, she told me that she normally works seven days a week, unless she is very tired. Her narrative suggests that she has adopted a professional service attitude, which entails putting the needs of the client (his stress relief) first, and either pushing her present ("authentic") emotions into the background, or, when this is not possible, withdrawing from work. Her talk is characterized by a strong imperative for aligning her emotional expression with the need of clients. Being a "management associate," her discourse of requesting discipline and rigorous emotion control from herself might be influenced by a management perspective that foregrounds business interests.

When reviewing the interview material, I noticed a strong prevalence of reflexivity and utilitarian rationality in women's narratives regarding the required emotional displays at work, as well as their personal practices of emotion management. Interviewees took the rational decision to suspend focus on their own emotions while working, adapting their emotional repertoire instead to situational requirements. Hochschild's (1983) inquiry into emotional labor was driven by her interest in what happens to individuals and social relations when emotions are harnessed by and for the purposes of capital. Her conclusion being that workers became alienated from their feelings—and thus from a part of their selves—which she considered harmful.

However, the effects produced by emotional labor cannot be generalized. Wendy Chapkis (1997, 76) contests the idea that feelings are "real" and "vulnerable" manifestations of the self which are threatened by commodification. She insists that "once sex and emotion have been stripped of their presumed unique relationship to nature and the self, it no longer automatically follows that their alienation or commodification is simply and necessarily destructive." She challenges an idea crucial to Hochschild's analysis which is that emotions are "natural." Drawing on the sociology of emotions she suggests that emotions are always already social—and thus "can be performed, created, objectified and exchanged" (Chapkis 1997, 73). She contends that "[e]motion is not something 'natural' that exists independently of its social expression and management. In managing feeling, we contribute to the creation of it. … The awareness and expression of feeling is necessarily a form of objectification" (ibid.). Hence, Chapkis rids emotions of their special status as innate and thus pre-social, suggesting that emotions are always in the process of evolvement and transformation.

Since Hochschild's exemplary study on emotional labor there have been a number of studies (Wharton 1993; Wouters 1989) that have questioned the supposed harmfulness of emotional labor, finding instead that practitioners possess or acquire the necessary capacities to accomplish this work. These capacities differ from individual to individual, but some cope quite well. In my study, there was no doubt that emotion management alleviated the everyday practice of sex work in Tijuana. It helped women structure and cope with their experience of selling sex; by separating their private and their work selves they were able to limit damaging impacts.

More recent studies have highlighted that context plays an important role, and that emotional labor can be both pleasurable and difficult for the worker, depending on a host of factors (Williams 2003). I have outlined elsewhere (Hofmann 2014) how Tijuana's sex industry allows women a significant degree of self-determination and control over aspects of their work, such as determining their work schedule, deciding over which kinds of sexual services they offer, selecting clients and charging customers directly rather than having to claim cash back from managers. Additionally, the relatively high earnings, which are possible from selling sex at the US–Mexico border, give many women economic independence and boost their and their families' material quality of life. While women's decisions to make their living this way tend to stem from certain structural constraints, Amalia Cabezas (2009, 12) has emphasized that "intimate exchanges," can be a "way to subvert systems of class and racial inequalities and allow for the creation of new identities." Despite sex work being embedded in systems of class and racial inequality (Hofmann 2013), its remuneration can contribute to economic empowerment and even social mobility.

I argue that a rational, calculative approach to emotion management during intimate work has three potential benefits: firstly, it can create a competitive advantage in a very competitive "sexscape"[7] (Brennan 2004; Hofmann 2013); secondly, suppressing negative feelings can create a less conflictual environment, and thus a more pleasant experience for the worker; and thirdly, as I will develop in the following section, it contributes to the construction of a professional identity. I agree with authors who highlight that whether harm or estrangement results from emotional labor is a question of context (Williams 2003). The strains of emotional labor ultimately depend on the intensity of the labor performed, a person's level of maturity on entering the profession, customer attitudes and

societal values regarding commercial sex, and the level of control workers have over the conditions and terms of their labor. I suggest that potential for harm is reduced when workers are allowed greater control over their working conditions. Additionally, I would like to draw attention to the importance of the earnings and their potential for self-actualization resulting from sex work and involved emotional labor. The sex workers I met in Tijuana counterbalanced an emerging sense of estrangement through emotional labor against its economic rewards, and thus its role in helping them achieve a better quality of life.

Emotion Management, Professionalism and Sex Work Ethics

This section explores sex workers' framing of professional conduct in terms of emotional labor. Interviewees associated professionalism in sex work with the provision of emotional labor: both "good practice" and "ethical" sex work practice were linked to emotion management. For instance, friendliness, politeness and treating clients with respect were considered important markers of a professional attitude, as Tamara explained:

> If a client doesn't want [to purchase sexual services from you], you should not insist or pressure him. There are girls who are very coarse in the way they work. In my case, if they don't want to, that's a no and I leave them alone.

In sex work "the client is king," as in other service industries. Tamara thought clients' preferences should be respected and they shouldn't be pressured into choosing a particular woman. This forms part of the "service attitude" which for many women I talked to defines professional sex work. Adopting such codes of practice brings rewards: treating clients respectfully and anticipating their desires takes emotional effort but is a financially sound strategy, since customer satisfaction means return visits. Alina, too, disapproves strongly of clients being hassled:

> I always say to my friends [clients] that I don't greet them only because I want a drink. "It depends on *you* whether you want to invite me." I don't go around begging. I greet them because they are my friends. "Everything depends on you. If you don't like me to greet you, just tell me and that's it. I will not greet you anymore."

Sex workers told me that some of their colleagues take advantage of uncertain or undecided clients and quite literally drag them to hotel rooms, something Rosalía considers to be very unprofessional conduct:

> The competition is very hard. It is very hard here because sometimes a client arrives and if I don't immediately grab him, then another woman says "He is mine," and she takes him, and if she doesn't do it then another one will. This is how it is.

Despite intense competition in sex establishments, Tamara, Alina and Rosalía said they would not steal clients from their colleagues; their ethical code says usurping another woman's client is disrespectful and undermines collegiality. It also seeds conflict, which spoils the atmosphere and lowers workplace morale. Women considered the cultivation of romance with customers equally disruptive and unacceptable. Amaranta describes what she considers an unprofessional work attitude:

> Some girls need psychological help because they over-attach themselves to men and if they see them sitting with other women, they start hitting the man or the woman. This is work, girls—get that into your head! Don't fight! If he really liked you, you wouldn't be working in this place.

Developing romantic feelings or a sense of ownership over a client, or fighting over clients, was considered very unprofessional. Sex workers expected their colleagues to detach their feelings from their work, and remain emotionally distant while being polite and courteous. Falling in love with clients was seen not just as unprofessional, but as potentially detrimental to one's long-term economic strategy. Many sex workers who considered themselves "aspirational" distanced themselves discursively from sex workers who were involved in *el ambiente*, "the social environment" of the red light district, detailing their efforts to avoid emotional entanglements with managers, staff and clients.

Our current global political economy is structured in terms of a north–south division, which allocates low-paid service work to a disadvantaged workforce. Emotional and affective labor, as well as other undesirable forms of labor such as care and intimate work, are being performed preponderantly by workers from the Global South (Cabezas 2009; Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2010), either as migrant workforce in countries of the Global North or within their home countries as part of low-paid tourist or other

service industries. In this global exchange of care and intimate work, it is often the labor of female workers that is utilized to socially produce other subjects and their lifestyles through, for instance, sexual pleasure and experiences of intimacy. A "global political economy of sex" utilizes and reproduces gendered and racialized structures of sexual relations for pleasure and for the reproduction of human beings within the capitalist economic system (Agathangelou 2004, 153). Some scholars have indicated that where the commercial sexual exchange crosses international and cultural borders, clients often demand even higher levels of emotional labor, due to sexualized and racialized assumptions about non-white women as being more sensitive, emotional or supportive of men than their white counterparts (Brennan 2004; Brooks 2010; McClintock 1995; O'Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor 1999). In the US–Mexico border zone, a setting characterized by sharp economic inequalities, emotion management becomes the mandatory task of people from Mexico and Central America who are providing services for affluent consumers from around the world.[8] This means that the particular rationality that underlies emotion prescriptions in service work is primarily an appeal made to workers from the Global South, and predominantly to female workers.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed how sex workers in Tijuana perform highly demanding forms of emotional labor as part of their work. To use Hochschild's (1983) categories, they engage in surface acting (feigning feelings) as well as deep acting (changing their original feelings to feelings adequate for the job). They control their anger, calm themselves down for work and manage their moods to optimize the atmosphere and their interactions at work. In the past, some sex work scholars thought that the worker's feelings were not only transformed, but also damaged in the process of selling sex-for-money, and that "one's entire emotional life is attacked" (Høigård and Finstad 1992, 110). My study found no evidence for the idea that women's feelings were impaired through their work or that they were left with an impoverished emotional life. The commodification of emotion does not inevitably have negative effects. Instead, this chapter has highlighted the ambiguity of emotional labor: while the emotional labor involved in sex work was indeed strenuous, it also provided a competitive advantage in a very competitive work environment, helped mitigate conflicts at work, and facilitated the construction of a professional identity.

My analysis of sex workers' emotional labor has shown that Hochschild's bifurcated distinction between authentic emotions versus emotions manufactured for the purpose of profit-making is not adequate for understanding commercialized emotions within contemporary capitalism, where individuals are complicit in engineering their emotions for particular motives. Both inside and outside of work, individuals constantly generate emotions and align them to their desires and aspirations in life. There is no such thing as an emotion existing outside of social engineering processes; instead, feelings are constantly being interfered with in social contexts, including during wage labor, and actors who manage their feelings always also contribute to their creation. Since there is no pre-social dimension of emotions, the claim that the commercialization of feelings is always and inevitably destructive does not hold.

Most women I talked to were not critical of the emotional labor that they were doing, but considered it a marker of their professionalism. I found that women's willingness and capacity for emotional labor differed from individual to individual, but some of the sex workers I talked to coped quite well and had developed a capacity (and some also a liking) for this aspect of their work. Emotion management allowed women to create boundaries and separate the self from the role they performed at work. It has become evident through this chapter that sex workers make complex calculations with regard to their employment of emotional labor. In order to acknowledge their choice and agency, it is important to understand that the strategic use of emotional labor in sex work—despite it constituting a further intensification of their work—can lead to increased financial gain, and thus, both shorten the overall time women spend selling sex and contribute to the accomplishment of their personal projects of self-realization.

In the consumption-driven, service-based economies of global capitalism, emotional exchange is an increasingly common element of commercial transactions. More and more components of human relationships, such as sexual and emotional intimacy, have been placed on the market. A wide range of service workers perform prescribed emotions on an everyday basis, negotiating the authenticity of their emotions at work alongside their personal identities. In this context, the radical feminist lens, which singles out prostitution from other kinds of work by distinguishing it as "selling the self" (Pateman 1988), or an aspect of the self, such as sexuality, intimacy or emotion, has become obsolete.

However, what is at stake here for a Marxist critique of the contemporary regimes of emotional and affective labor? Catherine Lutz (1990) has

pointed out that any discourse of emotional control is about power and about the relations between colonizer and colonized. She contends that, "the discourses about emotion can be one of the most likely and powerful instruments through which domination is exercised" (Lutz 1990, 77). Contemporary capitalism demands a particular rationality from workers that is directed toward adjusting workers' emotions toward the requirements of the market exchange. As in other types of service work, sex workers' emotional qualities are being harnessed by the industry they work in, compelling them to direct their emotions instrumentally toward the kinds of display most likely to maximize earnings. Instead of arguing against the instrumental use of emotions, I want to problematize the commercial use of emotions in relation to (1) workers' ability to appropriate the value of their emotional labor, (2) the cultural, legal and economic conditions in which emotional labor occurs, and (3) the ability of individuals to influence the transformation of emotion cultures (qualitatively).

Firstly, much of the research done on emotional labor refers to the formalized work contexts of big corporations. I would suggest that there is a significant difference between emotional labor carried out within the framework of a big organization, where an individual's emotional performance is externally directed, and the situation of self-employed workers. While in the former case, the surplus value accrued from emotional labor is appropriated by the company, the self-employed worker, as in the case of Tijuana's sex workers, can appropriate the additional value herself. Secondly, the context in which emotional labor takes place permits or prohibits worker control and self-determination over the activities performed. As my study suggests, Tijuana's sex workers enjoyed a great deal of independence in the organization of their work practices and selection of clients, providing them with a sense of self-directedness and control. Thirdly, neither employed nor self-employed sex workers (nor any other kind of service worker, in fact) are currently able to determine the qualitative dimension of the emotion culture at work. Operating in a competitive environment of limited resources (i.e. clients), both employed and self-employed workers must steer their emotion management toward the kinds of emotion displays and alterations of feeling that are most productive on the market, and thus, enable them to maximize earnings. Emotion cultures are not free from material conditions, but deeply entangled with gender, capitalism, inequalities and market demands. However, the organizational context within which emotional labor takes place cannot be overstressed. Management can introduce and enforce policies that protect

workers from excessive emotional stress at work (e.g. sexual harassment). Third-party employment protections for service workers could provide a shield between service workers and "demanding publics" (Hughes and Tadic 1998). In this way, employers who support abusive customers could not gain a competitive advantage, because there would always be the risk of exposure and prosecution. This would represent some progress toward breaking the nexus between service workers and pre-industrial notions about "the servant" (Williams 2003). Emotion cultures and implicit rules and discourses are part of the way we are currently being dominated, and sex work and the emotions performed as part of it cannot be singled out from the mainstream economy. Crucial for people's future ability to determine the qualitative dimension of emotion culture at work will be the creation of cultural, legal and economic conditions that increase autonomy in the management of emotions. Only then, will there be scope for diversion away from the utilitarian imperative of profit-maximization that dominates contemporary emotion cultures.

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Notes

1. Basis of this chapter is an ethnographic study conducted between 2006 and 2008. I interviewed both outdoor and indoor female sex workers in Tijuana's red light district, as well as talked to a broad range of actors present in the area, such as managers, clients, health workers, psychologists, shopkeepers, NGO workers and police officers. Most of the women I spoke to originated from Mexican states other than Baja California, and hence, had migrated to work in the border sex industry. Many had heard from female friends about the prospects of high earnings, and some had traveled up north together to try out sex work. It was quite common that women worked in Tijuana's sex industry on a seasonal, temporary basis, returning to their place of origin after a few months at the border. Even temporary workers, however, must be registered with the Department of Health Control (*Departamento de Control Sanitario*) and comply with regular health testing; see Hofmann (2014) for more information on the regulation of sex work in Tijuana. The women's ages

ranged from 18 to 53, many had small children, and they were ethnically diverse (*mestiza*, white, indigenous). While a majority stemmed from poor or working-class backgrounds, there were some women who had high school and university degrees and had worked as professionals. None of the women currently worked with a pimp or other intermediary (some older women had done so in the past).

2. Women still constitute the majority in professions that demand the engendering of "positive affect" in efforts to care, enhance, animate and contribute to the recreation of others. A greater number of men are involved in jobs that require the mobilization of "negative affect" necessary to control, sanction or police people.
3. "Immaterial labor"—first theorized by Maurizio Lazzarato, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri—describes forms of labor in which the product of the work is immaterial. Immaterial labor primarily draws on the affective and cognitive capacities of the worker. This term is often deployed in the context of the service sector, arts or new media and professions include telephone marketing assistants, game and web designers, communicators, animators, actors, artists and waiters among many others. Immaterial labor produces the informational, cultural or affective-experiential content of the commodity.
4. The English term hostess is probably the closest equivalent to the Mexican term *fichera*.
5. Many contemporary analyses of immaterial labor prefer the term "affective labor" over "emotional labor," because the category of affect traverses the divisions of mind and body, reason and emotion, and confounds the ontological containment that these dichotomies enable. Therefore, the concept may have the potential to overcome Hochschild's shortcomings with regard to the naturalization of emotions. Additionally, Kathi Weeks (2007, 241), for instance, opines that "it [affect] can better register the power of the subjectification effect," and "as laboring practices that are both expressive and constitutive of affect, their impact is potentially more pervasive than those that seem to signal merely a potential shift in consciousness."
6. Unfortunately, Rambo Ronai does not reflect on her own bodily and mental strategies as responses to sexism.
7. Brennan uses Appadurai's (1996) terminology of scapes referring to "both a new kind of global sexual landscape and the sites within it"

(Brennan 2004, 15). The concept accentuates the linkages of sex work to a globalized economy.

8. Tijuana's red light district is frequented by clients from diverse cultural, ethnic and national backgrounds, among them, for instance, Chinese; South-Asians; black, white and hispanic US Americans; Russians; and Middle-Easterners among others (Hofmann 2013).

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PART II

Sexualized Bodies on the Market

CHAPTER 5

A Feast of Men: Sexuality, Kinship and Predation in the Practices of Female Prostitution in Downtown Porto Alegre

José Miguel Nieto Olivar

Introduction

The 1980s are at an end.[1] The four women are in their 30s and support themselves professionally as street prostitutes. The all-powerful pimp/husband, seductive and violent, occupies a special place in all of their lives, together with corrupt, brutal and all-too-proximate police officers. They are engaged in a constant and daily war, plying a trade that is at once extreme, damned, sacred and yet marvelous. The "sex professionals" begin to timidly emerge through a process of political correction. They are, in the context of what I am writing here, four protagonists, co-constructors; artisans of the changes that will take place in their profession in the upcoming years.

I try to catch a glimpse of these four prostitute activists—Nilce, Soila, Dete and Janete[2]—in their passages through the 1980s, in all their "singularity and positivity" (Rago 2008), policing any "negative epistemologies" on my part (Strathern 1990), as well as any equalizing comparisons. I don't

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want to crystallize their voices in a "scientific explanation" which attempts to create a cohesive narrative, or freeze all possible interpretations and "reconfigurations" (Ricoeur 1994). I have simply chosen one road of the many open to me. From the prostitute women I worked with, I learned to understand prostitution as a meshwork of relationships. In this sense, following the Strathern's inspiration of "relationality" (1990), prostitution is a relationship produced by diverse specific relationships and people, and producer of people and of other relationships (Olivar 2013). Thus, I am especially interested in thinking about what selling sex in the streets of Porto Alegre was like in those years. How were genders constructed through that relationship called prostitution? What was the nature of the relationships in that meshwork? What form did sex take for sex workers? What forms did affective and family relationships take in the construction of the politics of paid love?

Here, I intend to present a delineation of the prostitute–pimp/husband relationship in that context. A relationship that was at the core of the prostitution relationality system, and that seems to me to have been a fundamental part of the embodied experience of an entire generation of prostitutes in Porto Alegre—women who are today (2015) in their 50s and 60s—and which was also a key part of the way in which lower-class street prostitution in that city was configured. It is a central relationship in the construction of prostitution as it has been lived by the four protagonists of the story I am telling here, but also as it is narrated within the prostitutes' movement. As I showed before (Olivar 2013), the prostitutes' movement's narrative and memories have the form of a multifaceted "war," connecting kinship, conjugality, police, sexual economies, urban transformation, the production of gender, and affects. So these are the outlines of a sexual war (Rubin 1999), an urban war (Arantes 2000) in which the *programa*[3] becomes a metonymy. I look at this war through the lens of gender.[4]

On the one side of the conflict, one perceives a radical multiplicity of the flows of feminine desires (Rago 2008), which are thought of as at the margins of socially hegemonic (middle class, State, prestigious, masculine) discourses, and which fall into the grab-bag category of "prostitution"—or, perhaps more appropriately, "whoreishness." These flows of non-hegemonic feminine desires challenge society, which is characterized by forces of normative territorialization, whose practices tend to produce a crystallization of experiences. These are

the forces of "biopower" (Foucault 2008), which repress/stimulate certain forms of life (and not others), certain bodies (but not others), certain uses of sex (but not others). This is, in the words of Deleuze and Guattari (2004), the "State form," the "judgment of God," which is constructed through control and the absolutist production of interstices.

Here, I don't wish to speak of blocks of people who are rigidly positioned in places—A or B—striving against each other (e.g. police against prostitutes). Rather, I want to talk about forces. I am trying to present a picture of perspectives that are not crystallized in fixed identities (Guattari 1981; Strathern 1990; Fausto 2000; Viveiros de Castro 2002). Perspectives that, obviously, act while housed in bodies and institutions, manifest as both visible and perceivable practices. Perspectives that are embodied by concrete people, sometimes fleetingly, sometimes over the long term (scarily so), and which depend upon established relationships, possibilities and interests.

A "*Programa*" Is Not Sex

Like many people who begin looking at prostitution via sexuality studies, I once assumed that the one thing you could say that a woman who is a prostitute does is fuck, screw, have sex. After all, aside being modern women, they are in Brazil, today, understood to be "sex professionals." It is natural for many of us to assume that prostitution and sexuality are linked, whether as a form of sexual oppression or transgression. A *programa* would thus be best understood as a sexual act, and the prostitute would have 5, 10, 15, however many sexual relations during the course of the day with 5, 10, 15, however many men.

But one day while I was sitting around in the *Núcleo de Estudos da Prostituição* (NEP—Prostitution Studies Nucleus)[5] with Dete (45) and Soila (43) my stable prejudices with regard to prostitution and sex were rocked.

From the very beginning of my research,[6] I had been interested in these women's sexuality, their eroticism, the ways in which their bodies were constructed and experienced by them during the course of their lives ("bodily trajectories"). It was May 24, 2007. We had spent the past nine months getting to know each other and falling in love with one another and we could now talk comfortably about sex. On that particular May day, the topic of anal sex was broached. I asked if they "took it up the ass."

"No, not generally…," Soila answered.

"But occasionally?" I insisted.

"Sure. Obviously. But not when I'm fucking," she responded.

("Not when you're fucking?" I thought to myself. "How can you 'take it up the ass' without fucking?")

"Aaaaahhhh, I do like it when I'm making love!" Dete emphatically interjected. "Not during a *programa*. I've done it during a *programa*, but I don't like it."

I was a bit confused. "But Sô," I asked. "What do you mean 'not when fucking'? And the *programa*: isn't it…?"

Soila interrupted me with a pitying look. "You just don't get it, do you Miguel?" she said, closing the subject.

Thinking about this and other discussions, it became clear to me that a complex conceptualization was at work here, a politics of sex and the body that made a complete distinction between *sex*, on the one hand, and the *programa,* on the other. Furthermore, I began to see that this distinction was present throughout the biographical narratives of my four protagonists who became prostitutes at the beginning of the 1980s, as well as in the words of the other prostitute women who made up my ethnographic present. Aside from this, the distinction joined together with others that I was trying to comprehend through the specific trajectories and processes of embodiment (Csordas 1994) present in these women's lives.

What was I to do with this radical statement? Is "sexuality" the best theoretical approach to understand the kinds of bodily practices that these women were telling me about? Was it legitimate to always assume that the bodily experiences of the *programa* could be neatly encapsulated in the category of "sexuality" when the women constantly affirmed that it was not sex?

***

If we accept a strong version of the anthropological principle that things are culturally constructed, we can think about things not as simply diverse expressions of more-or-less universal phenomena, but as things in and of themselves, which exist in different ways in different places and times, extending beyond their symbolization. This is the "radical" version of social constructivism (Vance 1999). By contrast, the "middle-grounded version" of the same seems to accept the supposition that, when all is said and done, the problems of the world are always the same, whether their roots are natural or social, and that societies, like people, invent extremely diverse solutions to deal with these same problems (Strathern

1990). Marilyn Strathern's perspective anticipates the appearance of difference. It does not limit difference to the solution of problems, but in fact leads to problematization itself. Societies, like people, "create" the most astonishing range of problems for themselves: they don't just solve them (Strathern 1990).

Influenced by this more radical posture, I opted to ethnographically investigate Strathern's affirmation. Three intertwined factors ended up pointing me toward the category of "kinship" as a means of understanding prostitution and questioning the absolute validity of "sexuality" as a theoretical tool for this project.[7]

The first factor came from the histories of the ways in which these bodies and prostitutions in downtown Porto Alegre were constituted in the 1980s. The second was a theoretical revision of Foucault's proposal regarding the "*dispositif* of sexuality." The third and final factor came from an anthropological field in which theories and studies of kinship are highly sophisticated and serve as a powerful key for understanding social realities: the ethnology of the Amazonian Basin. This last factor, in particular, has engendered much deep reflection upon types of relationships and their interrelation with bodily and practical operations.

Understanding that "a *programa* is not sex" allowed me to foreground certain types of evidence I was uncovering when I looked at the life history narratives of my four female protagonists. The "family/productive unit" could be seen as much more of a dominant axis in these narratives than the "individual/subjectivity," particularly in terms of the construction of bodies and the orientation of bodily practices. Prostitution was thought of as a family business, and it was important that it was thought of in this fashion, given that this was a new technology of production that brought together medical knowledge and police action. To be someone's wife and to be a prostitute were two processes which couldn't be cleanly separated. To be the wife of, the lover of and the worker of a person were experiences that were necessarily interdependent.

To be in a family, to be a wife, to have a husband/pimp, was a linked set of experiences that lay at the root of the ways in which sex, love and work were thought and constructed. The perspective of the androcentric, heteronormative, monogamic and monodomiciliary (the last two characteristics applying only to the women) family was a powerful integrating force, tying together individual wills. It imposed itself on a certain individualizing perspective that the years prior to prostitution had created in the lives of all four of my protagonists (and which would come to the fore in later

years as well). In all four cases, I clearly noticed that the women took a relatively individualistic attitude in relation to their families of origin, prior to prostitution. In later years, they adopted a more-or-less solitary form of living, with the constitution of new networks of female affiliation.[8]

We know that Foucault and an enormous network of social thinkers who dialogue with him (such as Rubin 1999; Weeks 1998; Parker et al. 2008; Correa 1996; Duarte 1999) believe that to speak of sexuality is not to speak of a more-or-less stable and universal set of bodily practices. To speak of sexuality is to speak of a more specific politics pertaining to the management of bodies, people and relationships, which is central to the foundation and expansion of Western modernity. This politics is linked to the primacy of the individual, erotic pleasure, the bourgeois couple, productivity and to scientific knowledge about oneself and the body (Foucault 1978).

The memories of Soila, Nilce, Dete and Janete regarding the 1980s disclose a logic, in which the family as productive unit takes on a central role. There was no scientific apparatus forming part of these women's quotidian lives that illuminated their sex and their personal selves. They didn't see psychologists, or even go to the doctor much. AIDS was just a dark cloud on the horizon. Sexuality was not what was relevant to them: what was important was family and work (and maybe the transgression of sexual morals) and that's what they talked about. In their narratives, one sees a universe that is much more similar to those forms of thought and being oriented to "alliance apparatuses" rather than to those produced by modern sexualities.

> The deployment of alliance is built around a system of rules defining the permitted and the forbidden, the licit and the illicit, whereas the deployment of sexuality operates according to mobile, polymorphous, and contingent techniques of power. The deployment of alliance has as one of its chief objectives to reproduce the interplay of relations and maintain the law that governs them; the deployment of sexuality, on the other hand, engenders a continual extension of areas and forms of control. For the first, what is pertinent is the link between partners and definite statutes; the second is concerned with the sensations of the body, the quality of pleasures, and the nature of impressions, however tenuous or imperceptible these may be. Lastly, if the deployment of alliance is firmly tied to the economy due to the role it can play in the transmission or circulation of wealth, the deployment of sexuality is linked to the economy through numerous and subtle relays, the main one of which, however, is the body—the body that produces and consumes. (Foucault 1978, 107)

Even though I am analytically privileging the "alliance," this picture is blurred and unsteady (it is not a photograph). This is not only due to the researcher's shaky hand, but also because the subjects of the portrait are, fundamentally, narratives of intensive transformation and differentiation, set against a backdrop that is an extremely complex social world. (Is this a video? A comic book?) As Foucault himself suggested and as the narratives I have recorded show, the two apparatuses being dealt with here do not exclude each other. They can and do co-exist, share space, substitute one another and mutually update each other. The alliance apparatus guarantees better economic conditions, but it also tends to annul the possibilities for women to property in their own name. At the same time, given that prostitution is the work in question here, this apparatus develops a series of subjectification and bodily stimulation mechanisms which treat the body as raw material in a production process.

One cannot thus simply substitute "sexuality" for "alliance": one must understand how processes of embodiment of these women were inscribed, circulated, transited, and how they contested, escaped from and dissolved specific forms of power at a moment in which the city that they lived in was going through important changes. As we shall see later, because a certain familiarizing power is presupposed in sex, and because it is recognized that these two things are perilously close to each other in the *programa*, the totalizing unit of woman–family–prostitution requires the existence of two deep and radically opposed perspectives on the bodily practices of the prostitute subject and the agents that surround her: that of the wife and that of the whore. A clear hierarchical relationship should exist between the one and the other which relegates shame and punishment to the whore, but also (and this is the great social danger), the potential for pleasure. *The programa*, in all its intimacy, is the action of becoming (a whore), whose dangerousness was known, managed by a necessarily de-sexualized being: the prostitute/wife/worker.

To take on the exchanges and tensions between the alliance and sexuality apparatuses as a possible hypothesis for the fabrication of these bodies and of the forms of prostitution that I am describing implies (following Foucault's suggestion) thinking about the place certain images of the family, as a "mechanism[s] of interdiction" (Foucault 1978, 87) or as a "major factor of sexualization" (Foucault 1978, 114), occupy in the constitution of these people and relations. In this way, the apparatuses of alliance and sexuality are not social solutions for a singular and unified natural problem (sex, desire): using Strathern's understanding (1990), we can see them

as different problems created by different societies, or, perhaps, by the same society at different moments, in different contexts; meta-pragmatic problems which structure kinship relationships in these cultures. Sexuality, as a *dispositif*, is central to the creation of modern Western society and to differentiating the European bourgeoisie from ancient, peasant and "primitive" societies.

On the Path of Belligerent Prostitution

With whom does one have sex and with whom does one not have sex? With whom does one make a *programa*? What is sex? What is a *programa*? Who threatens marital bliss? How? How does one guard against this threat? How are the bodies of relatives made and how can one avoid making someone one's relative to make a body of relatives, as do the bodies of relatives and how to avoid making someone relative? How does one neutralize an intimate enemy? What role does the customer play? Whom does one allow closest to one's body? The husband? Understanding this logic of relations is important to imagining how one "pre-reflectively" embodies the knowledge that makes possible this particular form of prostitution/family. How to radically understand the assertion that "no, there is no sex; you just do not feel that urge"?[9]

Notions, such as "going out hunting," "being eaten by," "eating someone" or a part of their body, "to battle," "battle clothes," "*nome de guerra*" (war name), as well as explicit practices of bodily prohibitions, of "predation" upon and by customers, not to mention the police's eternal war against prostitutes in addition to the family relations presented above, all suggested to me a useful path toward understanding. Seeking to further enrich my understanding of family relationships, war and bodily taboos, I found myself face to face with a provocation drawn from ethnology.[10] Anthropologist Carlos Fausto's concept of "familiarizing predation" (2000 and 2002), on the one hand, and the practical connection that this same anthropologist presents between cannibalism, commensality and kinship, on the other, seemed to me ideas that, *mutandis mutatis*, could be quite usefully applied to the field with which I was engaging.

Fausto (2002) constructs his concept of "familiarizing predation" by filling gaps that he himself claims that he had left in his earlier work (2000) regarding the tension between models of gift economies (Maussian reciprocal exchange) and models of mercantile economies—Marxist consumption and production (Fausto 2002, 7).

In this concept, predation is understood as a kind of exchange relationship in which consumption, production, appropriation and reciprocity are not presented as being mutually exclusive. Familiarizing predation, as its name suggests, has as its object the production of subjectivity and of relatives' (and non-relatives') bodies through hunting, cannibalism and commensality. It is understood as "a subjugating or enthralling act, by which it is determined who holds the viewpoint in a relationship. The greater subjective power of the predator is equivalent to their capacity to impose their perspective and thus control others" (Fausto 2000, 538).

"Predation therefore does not imply a simple denial of the other's perspective and the imposition of one's own. […] To be powerful, shamans and warriors can never fully control their *xerimbabos* [totem animals]" (Fausto 2000, 540–41). It is a relationship in which one always is both potentially hunter and hunted, given that predation is (and this will be very important in understanding our field) a relationship that always occurs between "entities endowed with agency and intention," and not between subjects and objects (Fausto 2000, 538). It is a theory of agency, exchange, consumption and power.

The idea of "familiarizing predation" leads directly to the problem of the hunt (Fausto 2002). In this framework, Fausto's definition of "cannibalism," placed in dialogue with the material collected during my research, offers an interesting inspiration for us to think about the problem of the construction of the person in the universe of street prostitution in Porto Alegre:

> We shall thus redefine the notion of cannibalism: cannibal is all forms of (literally or symbolically) devouring the other in his (raw) condition of personhood, a condition that is their default value. […] In the dimension of quotidian life, it is necessary for the animal to be absent as a subject so that identification can be produced among humans. It is necessary to block the always possible relationship between human and animal such that, through the meat of the latter, the commensals can produce themselves as humans and relatives (Fausto 2002, 19).

Fausto is speaking here of the animal/human pair, but we already know (Viveiros de Castro 2002; Fausto 2002) that such differentiation could be a matter of perspective. In the case of an intra-human relationship, such as the ones that concern us, we move between such pairs as family/subject, prostitute/punter[11], wife/whore, pimp/prostitute, us/society.

That which was hunted as food is a subject that needed to be de-subjectified in order to become useful for commensality. On the other hand, the one who was hunted—as an enemy—is a being whose subjectivity must be fed in order to be consumed by the family, and thus it is potentially an ally. To eat this meat, this body full of subjectivity and agency, is thus to both relate and become a relation through consuming power. In his work a "Feast of people…" (2002), Fausto carefully analyzes the procedures through which the Parakanã and other Amazonian indigenous peoples make a piece of meat into a food/object or a potential relative. This analytical procedure serves an example for us to understand the trajectories and the wide range of practices and differences that relations both propose and demand.

But what does all this have to do with a *programa* that is not sex? I am trying here to look at the *programa*'s "range of efficacy" (Strathern 1990, 93), where the prostitution relationship materializes and where ideas regarding sex, family, personhood, pleasure, production and marriage are renewed and updated.

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"To hunt" and "to eat," understood here as "meeting someone with whom to have a sexual relation," are very common expressions throughout Brazil. Generally, these terms correspond with the active/passive pairing understood to be inextricably linked to masculinity and femininity in our society. Thus, the active subject—the hunter and eater—is understood to be masculine and his prey is feminine. These categories are also central to and explicit in female street prostitution. From the point of view of prostitute women, the act of "eating" continues to be that of the masculine subject. "Hunting," however, is these women's sacred act (even though they never consider themselves to be masculine or masculinized and do not see themselves as engaged in masculine behavior).

The women—the prostitutes—are the hunters. And the stunning and slippery femininities with which they garb themselves are the body and clothes required to do battle. Because in the 1980s, on streets such as *Voluntários da Pátria*, hunting is an act of war, of celebration, of work and of family. In these early stories from the beginning of my protagonists' lives as married women/prostitutes, they systematically learned about their relationship to eating—the delicious act of (literally or symbolically) "devouring," in terms of Fausto (2002, 19).

In the logic of belligerent prostitution that we see in these narratives, "eating a whore" is at the base of the punter's fantasy and is thus at the

center of prostitution's efficacy as a practice. The client also thinks of himself as a hunter, a buyer, an eater—one who uses a body which he understands as available.[12] This is the point of view of the client, who should be satisfied by the prostitute. The whore is there to be eaten: a delicious dish. This is also the perspective that is embodied by the women and their husbands, who find in this "eating" one of the axes of their relationship as well: the wife is also there to be eaten.

These were the risks and the potentialities that the *programa* invoked for the production of conjugality. If, in my protagonists' narratives of those years, sex was central to the images of family and love that these women, as women, personified … if sex was an activity that was ideally linked to love and which occupied spaces and moments that were well demarcated and quite specific, then whatever happened with 20, 30, 40, however many clients every day was anything but sex. And maybe it needed to occur in this sort of quantity precisely to remind us that it was not sex.[13]

In these relationships, in which pimping and conjugality are strongly mixed, the women incorporate the amalgamated perspective of the wife: woman/family/worker. The perspective of this specific form of marriage/production was taken on in the first months or years of the relationship. This was the perspective of the hunter. And the clients…? The women were interested in their financial potential, the frequency of their custom, their respect. It was these men's capacity for seduction and the *malandragem*[14] that needed to be neutralized, along with their semen, in order for the relationship to occur without stress or drama. So if, on the one hand, it was required that a good client be at his maximum level of potency and capacity for agency (so that he would not fall in love, would have money, would want to have sex, would want to come back always but also always go away), on the other hand, he needed to be neutralized. A certain sort of power that was very important to the masculinities at play in this time and place needed to be undone, so that the client wouldn't try to take more than what was agreed upon, or successfully seduce the prostitute.

It is only through a careful arranging of the operative conditions of the work, managed by a husband/pimp and incorporating a series of bodily practices and knowledge that will successfully erotically stimulate the client, absolutely controlling the time and conditions of ejaculation (the central point of the *programa*), that—even while being eaten—the prostitute/warrior/wife can impose her perspective, and thus appropriate the powers of the client with the least possible risk to herself.

It is in this inebriating forged image, which is neither ambiguous nor paradoxical, that the huntress/prey, the defeated warrior, the *vagina dentada* (toothed vagina), that the prostitute finds her power in the prostitution relationship. It is this that her body knows to do, with every muscle, every piece of clothing, in every sigh or moan: to be profoundly and organically active in the creation and satisfaction of a certain kind of male sexuality.

The investments made in neutralizing the client's potency with the practices employed in the *programa* can be understood in at least two mutually dependent ways. On the one hand, (1) as the production or prohibition of certain practices and conditions in the course of the *programa*, and on the other, (2) the always incomplete attempt at de-subjectivation of the ontological transformation of customers into non-men. Let's see how this worked.

Going Out to Eat: The Risk of Practice

In terms of the production of and intervention in the bodily practices during the *programa* we have, above all else, the management and production of the conditions of the *programa*. Fifteen-minute *programas*, a minimum quota of end-of-the-day money imposed by the pimp, and networks of surveillance, protection and control guarantee the security and good judgment of the body of the worker/wife, as well as the stability of the business and the family. Hotels were (and are) part of the networks of proximity and trust. They were both the safe territory of the hunter and the panopticon for control. For this reason, one did not frequent just any hotel or other sort of venue.

There was also erotic knowledge and body techniques that needed to be learned and developed, which maximize the client's pleasure at the same time that they literally put him under the control of the woman. Performances, postures, gestures and movements that feed the client's excitation, loss of control and final ejaculation, and which lead to them spending money to eat more, to ejaculate again, or to schedule return visits and become a "customer."[15] Through those erotic, bodily techniques the *programa*'s complexity acquires its greatest efficacy, through which that whole relational complex of worker/wife/prostitute–partner/pimp-prostitution becomes totally effective, given that once the women "become the whore" in order to satisfy the client's perspective, the women are able to both withdraw and impose the perspective of the wife/prostitute and thus that of the family.

It is in this investment in the client's erotic wishes, in the sophisticated management of his desires, that the whore as "dividual,"[16] the whore as a topographic and corporal power ("becoming the whore"), comes into existence. We should thus suppose, as my four protagonists suggest, that this whore performance does not occur without conflicts in terms of inter- and intra-personal relationships. After all, for the women—whether as wives or prostitutes—"whore" is an insult: it is the most faithful and dear name one applies to one's female enemies.

It is via this route that we can come to understand what is made visible in my protagonists' narratives: not all practices have the same level of efficacy as those involved in the *programa*, nor the same level of danger in terms of their capacity to constitute people and relations.[17] Just as Dete, who was spied upon and caught by her pimp after completing a "blowjob" with a "punter," all of the women spoke of husbands/bosses who taught the rules of the game, and were anxious to catch the wives/prostitutes out during the marriage/work; who executed punishments when the rules were broken, who neutralized the power of the women. And all of the women told me that the rules were constantly violated.

"Taking it up the ass" and giving oral sex, for example, seem to be practices much appreciated by men, but which occupy an ambiguous position within this conceptual logic. Not all of the women allowed anal sex. Aside from the cultural prohibitions referring to filth or the nature of organs, the practice also involved a larger amount of bodily effort and discomfort, as well as a relative loss of power (in the sense that the women became more exposed to pain and injuries). "Blow jobs," however, were much more accepted and a much more frequent practice. They permitted a total control on the part of the prostitute (given that the man generally occupied a passive position with regard to the woman) and they did not involve more effort or discomfort. On the other hand, in the logic of this familiarizing prostitution, anal and oral sex (in pre-AIDS, condom-free Porto Alegre) were also effective forms of birth control. To "blow a guy" and then "beat him off until he came" was the safest and most effective way of appropriating the client's potency. This practice probably didn't guarantee greater financial gains. However, it facilitated the neutralization of the client, given that the body of the huntress multiplied its agency to the degree that it was not penetrated and remained physically distant from intimate contact, orgasm and the possibility of reproduction.

I never heard of interdictions with regard to vaginal penetration, at least from heterosexual prostitute women. This is considered to be the natural basis of the prostitution relationship. This silence says a lot about

vaginal penetration and it is its very naturalness that makes it an extremely risky practice. After all, it is the penetration of the vagina by the penis, the practice known in Brazil as "mommy, daddy" and which is attributed to husband and wife, which is iconic of reproduction—of all reproductions. This, of course, is the practice that makes possible consanguine kinship—the type of kinship that is most valued in Brazil (Fonseca 2004a; Victora 1996). When it occurs with the client, it completely weakens the family/productive structure.

Finally, there are two practices that seem to be boundaries. First of all, there is "fucking them up the ass" (presented by Dete in the following manner: "They wanted to get fucked up the ass"), a practice that I've never heard presented as taboo. And there is also the diametrical opposite: "when they ate us out with their tongue."

The first practice is very often present in the stories of southern Brazilian prostitutes of all ages and it immediately and happily imposes the woman's perspective on the client, up to the maximum level of de-subjectification. It signifies prey hunted and brought down in the safest way possible. Very often I heard women insulting and disdaining the men who allowed this sort of practice, always in terms of putting said men's presumptive heterosexual normativity in doubt: "[that guy is] a closeted fag," a "repressed queer." In these women's perspective and that of their husbands, men who "take it up the ass" immediately lose whatever potential threat they might pose. They signify zero risk to the stability of the family and to the relation of perspectives.

The second practice, however, was more taboo because, as Dete claims, it was synonymous with female pleasure: "there's not a woman who won't cum [with cunnilingus]." Given that female pleasure was the ultimate taboo, cunnilingus was strictly prohibited. For a woman to orgasm meant that she relativized in the most blatant possible way the position of her husband while simultaneously affirming the agency and intentions of the client. At the same time, a female orgasm raised the specter of that most feared character, the out-of-control whore.

To make a woman cum "with one's tongue" was something that said a lot about a man who was able to do it, and this practice thus had great symbolic value. To cum "on a [client's] tongue" revealed the failure or fragility of the wife/worker, as well as of the amalgamated perspective of woman/husband/family, given that the woman's body was necessarily open to being devoured during cunnilingus, while the client was transformed into the wise hunter.

In this way, "to make the woman cum" was something that conspired against the monogamic, androcentric relationship of alliance that lay at the heart of this sort of prostitution, crossing dividual boundaries and stimulating a terrible fusion between the whore and the prostitute/wife through the establishment of an organic affinity within the four walls of a tiny motel room.

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The ways of conceptualizing, producing and interdicting work practices need and produce certain types of perspectives and people in relation to the ways in which gender is thought and masculinities and femininities are embodied on a daily basis.

Local conceptualizations of gender and of the capacity for agency (e.g. being a manly man and a *malandro*,[18]), together with the notions of the family described above, are the superimposed variables that most often come to the fore in the understandings of different kinds of people that are presented in the women's narratives. The *programa* is not sex, but is related to this order that produces people. Sex is always described by my protagonists as a form of relationship between agents. For it to exist in a safe form, the relationship (prostitute/wife) needs the (potential) existence of a client that is not an agent: it is thus necessary to imagine a more-or-less stable de-subjectification of the client. A predator/prey relationship that manifests in the view of the client as a punter or *trouxa* (fool).

Trouxa is synonymous with hapless and witless. It is any person, man or woman, who let themselves be robbed, scammed, fooled. The woman who gives her money to her husband is a *trouxa*, as is the woman who passively lets herself be beaten or who tolerates *boias*[19] without turning the situation to her advantage. Dete remarks that Júnior was a *trouxa* when he decided to move his *boia* into his house. If he hadn't done that "he'd still be with the two of them today." But *trouxa* is also a term frequently applied to clients. If it is true that anyone can act the *trouxa* (and the women often apply the term to themselves), clients were understood to be "the" *trouxas*.

In a universe where manly men (pimp/husbands) "eat" several women who give the men their money, where masculinities such as that displayed by Mimoso[20] are both feared and admired ("those guys were true pimps!"), and where lack of money is always present in women's discourse, to have to pay to "eat" (and thus surrender to witchcraft) was something looked upon with disdain. The *malandragem* was constitutive of the relations and

the gender images that women and husbands embodied and constructed through everyday life, as well as of the practice of prostitution itself. In a universe marked by battles and table-turning, where the hunter is always at risk of becoming the hunted, being able to hunt and be "eaten" by someone who is already de-subjectified before you even meet them is an enormous relief.

To be a *trouxa*, then, is to experience a type of non-agency. A *trouxa* is a sort of not-man with whom one can have a type of not-sex—the *programa*—which has as its greatest moment of self-actualization the image of the client who actually pays to be "eaten" himself. An other whose production and devouring reinforces the ties of kinship, whose devouring (and whose production as a *trouxa*) is often only completed at the collective family table, where he is virtually drawn and quartered with words, laughter and narration. It is this commensality that makes food the central axis of kinship, after all. Circles of prostitute women, gossiping, laughing and telling stories about their anonymous clients, their *programas*. One thing that becomes evident in all this is the enormous destabilizing power of the *programa*, given the efforts the family goes through to virtually neutralize it.[21]

(In)Conclusion

The logic of the relation here conceptualized as "predation" seems to me to be especially useful in understanding street prostitution, particularly in the context of the old pimp/husband-style of control over this form of sex work, now dying out in both Brazil and in another countries. I have never felt comfortable, during my fieldwork, with some radical feminist reading (which underpins much abolitionist and anti-trafficking literature), in which prostitution is understood to be the mercantile objectification of women by men, an understanding that necessarily negates any capacity for female agency, and denies that any true exchange can ever take place when sex is bought with money. On the other hand, such notions as the "sexual market" (Piscitelli 2005, 2007, 2013), or "sexual economies" (Cabezas 2009), as well as the "sex industry" (Agustín 2007) try to stimulate another understanding of prostitution, sex work (Kempadoo 2004) and the commerce of sex (Bernstein 2007) without provoking sexual and moral panic. On the one hand, sex/money exchanges are inserted into wider markets of sexual and affective exchange, in which no form of sex/love excludes financial interest, and in which the "agency" of the women becomes pivotal. On the other hand, the sex trade and sex work are incorporated into the logic of the organized transnational liberal economy.

Readings of prostitution that assume that it follows a gift economy (with its interactions structured by reciprocity), or is a form of dispassionate and cold sexual labor (Fonseca 2004b), or that it is composed of clear and easily perceived accords seem insufficient to me. These readings, to my mind, necessarily leave out the asymmetric and structuring violence that surrounds and constricts the sale of sex, but which nevertheless involve female agency (Kempadoo et al. 1995). Prostitution, as my research has revealed, is neither reciprocity and gift-giving, a clearly contractual market/labor game, nor masculinist mercantile instrumentalization/domination.

The analytical and political perspective that utilizes such resources as "sexual markets" and "the sex industry" are very important. When we turn to the micro-scale, however, which is the realm of ethnography, they really don't seem to work very well. Minimally, "sexual economies," contracts and reciprocities need to be specifically described and problematized. It may be that I find these notions to be strange at a grassroots level, because historical change has taken place, shifting the context and conditions of prostitution from those that were hegemonic when my protagonists began to work in this field. Or, perhaps, my protagonists' experiences are simply different from those of prostitutes studied by other researchers. For me, however, street prostitution in downtown Porto Alegre, at least in the 1980s, was a war: a well-organized, moral, affective, embodied/embodying, territorialized/(de)territorializing, high-performative and furtive play of hunters and hunted, the sought and the caught.

Predation and cannibalism are useful metaphors in this context, poetic connections that permit us to trace out a wider and more complex comprehension of prostitution and also, perhaps, in other forms of sexual/affective relationships, in which concepts such as romantic candor and/or masculinist mercantile perversion are not, in and of themselves, sufficient to explain observed reality.

"Predation" is not a concept that was used nor even explicitly suggested by my protagonists. For this reason, one must be careful to not understand it following its more vulgar meanings (depredation, destruction), something which would only serve to increase violence against prostitutes, as well as introducing etymological confusion. Predation does not define prostitution: it helps us to understand it within the framework of greater war-like relations and cultural expansion, of appropriation of potencies, conflicts between agencies and perspectives, table-turning and *malandragem*. It is a war whose most constant objective is the defense and/or (re)production of the family and society.

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This is the anthropological frame of existence for the potent and conflicting embodiment of the fundamental moral opposition between work and "whoring," between being a worker/wife and a whore. After all, if we look at these narratives from the 1980s, the woman who did a *programa* with a client wasn't there to have fun, to screw around, to have an orgasm: she was there to work and make money for her family. Family models and work codes were thus constructed; limits were embodied, as were people and perspectives; clothes were changed and disguises adopted. Women became huntresses in order to be dedicated and (relatively) faithful wives. Years later, these same women became solitary cougars, hunting better *trouxas*, "friends" and "lovers" and, in the classic Brazilian phrase, "uniting that which is agreeable with that which is useful."

The "whore" is thus a category of moral destabilization in becoming (Olivar 2013). Being rakish, a traitor and always attempting to avoid work if possible, the becoming "whore" can be dangerous to the family project. The *whore* was a too-proximate character for the professional/marital sex worker. She needed to be treated carefully so that one wouldn't become joined with her, preyed upon by her. My protagonists thus embodied a professional character, much as do, for instance, gynecologists, masseuses, union organizers and many researchers; they created a total separation between their public and private lives.[22] They adopted a certain kind of "pre-reflexivity" concerning their body, which was not sexualized when they went out to hunt. The contact they had with penises was not necessary sexual, and the vaginas that devoured said penises did not belong to them, but to the "whore." This is a sort of femininity in which sex is not a physical act, but something that is only possible in the context of conjugal love—or (because we should not forget the escapes and dodges, nor the later years of these women's lives, when sexuality would occupy a much more central position) in the context of affection, sexual desire and mutual satisfaction.

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Notes

1. This chapter is a translation of an article published originally in Portuguese by Rev. bras. Ci. Soc., vol. 26, no. 75, São Paulo, Feb. 2011, ISSN 0102-6909.
2. These four women are also the protagonists of my doctoral thesis, of which this text is an important part.
3. The term *programa* (engl. "program") refers to the sexual transaction that takes place between client and prostitute. It is a relationship whose conditions and limits are explicitly negotiated between the two parties, which generally begins with haggling out the price to be paid, and ends when the client ejaculates.
4. I approach gender via the works of Marilyn Strathern (1990), thinking of gender as a "categorical substantive" based upon the image of sexual difference, necessary for the comprehension of the totality of social relations and not only of the (power, sexual) relations between men and women (as fixed terms of relation).
5. NEP—the *Associação Gaúcha de Prostitutas* (Gaucha Prostitutes' Association)—is a political organization based in Porto Alegre, which is part of the Brazilian Prostitutes' Network and which leads the prostitutes' movement in southern Brazil.
6. This chapter stems from my doctoral thesis in Social Anthropology at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. I conducted ethnographic fieldwork with the NEP between August 2006 and January 2009, especially with four female protagonists of the research, and with prostitutes from the NGO Davida in 2009 in Rio de Janeiro. The four women who were central to my research and this article, were born between 1955 and 1965 in the rural interior of the Brazilian State of Rio Grande do Sul, and between the late 1970s and early 1980s they entered street prostitution in the center of Puerto Alegre, pursuing better economic conditions and selling sex within the framework of an affective/marital relation. From the year 1989 they turned activists for human, sexual and labor rights of sex workers, while continuing to sell sex (see Olivar 2010, 2013).
7. Please remember that I am strictly and only referencing narratives that deal with street prostitution in downtown Porto Alegre in the 1980s. As the years pass, social classes shift and generations succeed one another, this approach changes and we can see the beginning of a more consolidated paradigm of sexualization and individuation (Olivar 2010, 2013).

8. One can undertake an interesting exercise by comparing the characterizations of families made by Fonseca (2003[2000]), Knauth (1996) and Victora (1996), regarding lower-class Porto Alegre families in the 1980s. Regarding transformations and new generations, see Heilborn et al. (2006).
9. Regarding "embodiment" see Csordas (1990 e 1994), and Terence Turner (1994), from whom I take the concept "pre-reflexive." On the other hand, regarding the body, power and society, see also Foucault (1995), Strathern (1990), and Viveiros de Castro (2002). These authors do not share the same anthropological perspective regarding the problem of the body. A careful reading that respects their differences, however, can result in new approaches such as the one presented here. Regarding body, gender and kinship, see Carsten (2004).
10. For a trajectory of the concept of "kinship" in anthropology, see Parkin and Stone (2004), Schneider (2004), Rapp (1992), Strathern (1995a, 1995b); Carsten (2000, 2004); Viveiros de Castro (2002); and Fonseca (2003 and 2007).
11. Informal, chiefly British term for a prostitute's client.
12. Bernstein (2007) clearly demonstrates how male eroticism and thus the searches conducted in the sexual market have massively changed over the past years. Regarding clients in Porto Alegre, see Peres (2009).
13. The relationship between marriage and prostitution is here thought in the terms the women used to describe it in those years and, at the same time, as a deep dichotomy and as a unified and necessary territory. The later life of these women (Olivar 2013) shows, as many other studies of prostitution and sexual markets confirm, how this relationship is transformed and often diminished. In this sense, it is important to remember that the rhetoric regarding "hunting" and "predation" is not exclusive to prostitution/marriage, but is also found in other shorts of sexual-affective relationships and alliances and, indeed, in the field of gender more generally. I'd like to thank Thaddeus Gregory Blanchette for his comments on this point.
14. *Malandragem* is a social notion of agency, which is very important in Brazil. *Malandragem* can be defined as an aggregation of strategies that individuals employ in order to gain advantage in a determined situation. *Malandragem* is characterized by *savoir faire* and subtlety. Its execution demands aptitude, charisma, and

shrewdness, and whatever other characteristics which allow for the manipulation of people or results, to obtain the best outcome, in the easiest possible way.

15. A "customer" is a frequent client. As we shall see farther on, as the years pass, the relationship with customers becomes closer, less "professional" and more "familiar."
16. The notion of the "dividual" is a critique of the Western notion of the "individual," imagined as unified and undivided (Strathern 1990).
17. Not all clients pose the same kind of threat. Classifications of age, race, appearance, bodily characteristics and ability to pay (among many others) are constantly employed.
18. *Malandro* (derived from *malandragem*, see earlier footnote) is a Brazilian word that can be translated as clever player, trickster, rogue, hustler, rascal, or scoundrel; generally, the term refers to an ambivalent figure that is both admired and despised.
19. In the universe of Porto Alegre prostitution, a *boia* is any other woman of the husband/pimp who is not his principal wife or one of his principal wives. The verb *boiar* is to maintain sexual relations with someone outside of the context of marriage or work.
20. Soila's ex-husband/pimp: "the last great pimp of the century."
21. Once again, I remind readers of Carlos Fausto's (2000) work, in which to be a predator is always to risk being prey. In my discussions with prostitute women, one or another man is always pointed out as exceptional, as someone with a unique capacity for defeating the huntress and who "really knows how to eat." These men are presented as "real men" in these tales. Regarding the place of gossip in female sociability, and in the construction of gender, see Fonseca (2004a).
22. I would like to thank the anthropologists and my friends Paula Machado and Nadia Meinerz for their reflections upon gynecologists.

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CHAPTER 6

Neoliberalism, Oil Wealth and Migrant Sex Work in the Chadian City of N'Djamena

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Introduction

This chapter documents the diverse motivations for entering sex work and explores the experiences transnational Cameroonian sex workers make with their clients in N'Djamena, the capital of Chad. It examines their sex work practices, the risks as well as the various coping strategies they have adopted to handle the neoliberal economic context in which they operate. We argue that while the life worlds of these women are shaped by political, economic and social forces that they cannot control, their actions should be read in terms of situated agency (Choi 2007; Peter 2003; Sen 1977, 1985, 1995). Agency, Amartya Sen (1985) concedes, is the ability to set and pursue one's own goals and interests, including the pursuit of one's own wellbeing. Other ends may include furthering the

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wellbeing of others, respecting social and moral norms or acting upon personal commitments and the pursuit of a variety of values (Sen 1977; Peter 2003). Cameroonian sex workers in Chad have created individual innovative, entrepreneurial strategies to adapt themselves to and cope with the neoliberal economic and political context. While a conjuncture of lack of marketable skills and economic crises in their home countries pushed them into the sex trade, making money to take care of themselves and their families bears the chance to mitigate the suffering, hardship and oppression that they face in their everyday lives.

How is the overarching market ideology of neoliberalism shaping the habitus of these sex workers in the context of the stigmatization of sex work and oppression from the Chadian State that categorizes sex work as crime and refuses sex workers rights? What creative and innovative strategies have these migrant sex workers adopted to cope with exploitation and oppression in the neoliberal context? And how is the agency of these women manifested in their everyday lives? In the section that follows, we will describe the data elicitation process before examining the neoliberal economic context that structures the life worlds of these women and their coping and entrepreneurial strategies.

We conducted both informal conversations and individual in-depth interviews with sex workers and undertook participant observation in villages traversed by the Chad–Cameroon pipeline project in 1999 and 2000 for a total of 20 months as consultants for the Cameroon Oil Transportation Company S.A. (COTCO) on the socioeconomic impact of the project on local livelihoods. Furthermore, local level ethnography on entrepreneurship associated with petroleum exploitation in communities in southern Chad (Komé Atan, Doba, Belabo, Moundou and Miladi) and N'Djamena was conducted between February 2013 and December 2014. Participant observation comprised of "hanging out" with sex workers and oil industry workers in bars, restaurants and nightclubs, as well as interactions with other stakeholders in the sex industry—waiters, pimps, brothel owners and some of the men who patronize sex workers. Through these interactions, we became acquainted with the intricacies of sex work and the general working conditions, every weekend for a period of six months. We targeted locations frequented by rich white expatriates and local middle class men and built relationships of trust and openness over time. The former are considered to be more "generous" with money and represent wealth (Groes-Green 2014, 241). N'Djamena is headquarters of the African multi-national Joint Task Force in the fight against Boko Haram;[1] it has a French army base, Western diplomats and a flood of international development workers.

To capture the diverse motivations, experiences and situated agency of transnational Cameroonian sex workers in N'Djamena, we adopted a qualitative approach, which could do justice to the multiple realities lived in the sex trade and validate each individual's experience. Through a casual, circumstantial selection process, we found 11 sex workers (aged 21 to 30) from different cultural regions of Cameroon who volunteered to participate in our study. Additionally, three bar proprietors who mediate the sex trade and other witnesses were also interviewed. Since prostitution is illegal in Chad, we had to establish access to sex workers through bar owners and sometimes procurers who mediate the sexual transactions between the sex workers and their clients. Participants had to be assured that the information they provided would remain confidential. Sex workers were offered drinks to compensate for their time, unlike the three bar men and two pimps who we befriended who received no compensation.

The aim of our research was to understand the differences in background, family and cultural experiences of the women who had migrated to Chad. Most women came to Chad through existing social networks with the motive to find work, attracted by the promise of employment generated by oil exploitation. Two were brought to N'Djamena by their lovers from the Cameroonian coastal town of Kribi during the construction phase of the pipeline. Some of the women were full-time petty traders, selling cooked food in makeshift structures during the day, and selling sex at night. Other women worked as bar-tenders or waitresses but also sold sex on the side.

Neoliberalism and the Chad–Cameroon Pipeline Development Project

Since the 1990s, both Chad and Cameroon have been under World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). The forceful adoption of neoliberal reforms by both countries led to economic hardship, galloping unemployment among the youth, rising social inequalities, privatization of state-owned enterprises and rural–urban and transnational migration to different countries including Chad. It was against the backdrop of those neoliberal reforms that the World Bank pushed for the 1.070 km long Chad–Cameroon Petroleum Development and Pipeline Project as a way of improving development prospects in both Cameroon and Chad through poverty alleviation by serving as a catalyst for employment (Pemunta 2013; Shombong 2010). Constructed to transport crude oil from fields in southeastern Chad to Kribi on the Atlantic coast of Cameroon, the project was estimated to

result in huge financial gains for both countries. It led to an unprecedented surge of migrants from Cameroon to Chad in search of employment opportunities. Ensnared by the quest for a better life, and with an exaggerated expectation of new cash earning opportunities, huge numbers of African migrants including food-vendor-prostitutes[2] from Cameroon migrated into the country to cash in on the new found oil wealth:

> My friends who had been to N'Djamena told me a about petrol and the new found wealth in Chad as a result of which many whites have moved into the country. They told me how the sex market was booming. I then decided to come to N'Djamena. I started frequenting bars and night clubs and I could see for myself that things were good. I made some customers at the very beginning who really loved me. They gave me huge sums of money: XAF[3] 50,000 (US$100), XAF 25,000 (US$50) etc. There were evenings when I came home with about XAF 200,000 (US$400) (sex worker Mado,[4] 26 years).

The construction and maintenance of the pipeline came with adverse effects on indigenous communities and the environment, including evictions from ancestral land at times with little or no compensation and the degradation of the coastal reefs during the construction phase. This not only affected the underwater habitat but also the livelihoods of the local people who depended on agriculture and fishing as their main sources of income (Shombong 2010). Almost 1000 households reportedly lost land (Gender Action 2011, 6).

This act of dispossession (Harvey 2005)—what Marx described as "primitive accumulation"—orchestrated by the decision makers of the pipeline development project comprises of the commodification and privatization of land, the forceful eviction of peasants using police power, the acquisition of private property rights and the appropriation of natural resources. By backing these processes with its monopoly of violence and monopoly over the definition of what legality or illegality is, the State provides a facilitative regime for capital accumulation (Harvey 2005, 159; Pemunta 2014).

As a state-backed project and form of dispossession, oil exploitation has often been characterized by far-reaching socioeconomic and environmental consequences, for instance, in the Ecuadorian Amazon (Sawyer 2004) and Argentina (Shever 2012). Corporations benefit at the detriment of indigenous populations. Neoliberal privatization entails the transformation of natural resources from a national into a financial asset, as well as the

establishment of "intertwined spaces of oil and habitation" (Shever 2012, 27), with refineries negatively affecting the health of residents by discharging toxic substances into water, streams and atmosphere. This picture resonates with the effects of the Chad–Cameroon pipeline project on local residents. Corporate profit took precedence over the life and wellbeing of the local population that has instead been pushed into pervasive poverty, with women in particular bearing the brunt of the suffering.

In all regions of Cameroon, farming and trading, mostly undertaken by women, provide the main sources of household income. Food shortages resulting from climate change had already worsened women's socioeconomic wellbeing. The pipeline construction destroyed even more crops on which women depended on for their trade and endangered their livelihoods due to the loss of farmland and decrease in soil fertility. The pipeline eroded women's decision-making power, access to resources, ability to meet daily needs, status in their communities, household and personal income, amount and quality of farmland, water quality, local habitat and harvests. All of this led to an increase in domestic violence and "sexual subordination" to men, and "a drop in income and an increase in poverty" (Gender Action 2011, 8). Since most families resident in the pipeline construction area are dependent on the land for their livelihood, the smallest land loss can be dramatic and life threatening, with women and children being the ones most at risk (Gender Action 2011, 6).

Apart from undermining subsistence activities largely performed by women, such as fishing and small-scale agriculture, settlements sprung up around temporary work sites, causing demographic changes in local communities and disrupting local economies as relatively well-paid oil workers came into these communities. The neoliberal infusion of capital and technology led to the increased mobility of Western "expats" into the region, which provoked the reshaping of local kin relations and household economies (for examples of similar processes in other regions of Africa see Groes-Green 2014; Hunter 2009). As increased poverty diminished women's income-earning opportunities in their communities of origin, the rate of migrant prostitution directed toward wealthier areas rose. The few women who did manage to get jobs in the male-dominated extractive industries reported experiences of sexual harassment and gender-based violence (Gender Action 2011, 1). A four country comparative study of pipeline development projects in Cameroon (Chad–Cameroon pipeline project), Nigeria, Ghana and Togo (the West African Gas Pipeline (WAGP)) suggests that women suffer disproportionately from extractive projects.

Women experience marginalization in income generation, decision-making and access to critical resources like education, land, credit and technology. Furthermore, they are sidelined in consultation processes, discriminated against in compensation schemes and employment opportunities, and their critical livelihoods are undermined (Gender Action 2011, iv).

Attracted by the influx of petroleum money, young men and women took the pipeline construction sites by storm for work. The project employed about 6000 people from diverse origins. However, since the beginning of production in 2003, more than 90 percent of foreign workers have already left (Gender Action 2011). The pipeline created short-term manual work. Men were brought in for construction, digging, land clearing, and the cleaning of oil containers, whereas women worked as food vendors for the pipeline workers during the construction phase or as domestic workers who were paid much less than men. During that period, some women were engaged in sex work around the base camps for pipeline employees. When questioned on the spike in the number of prostitutes in N'Djamena, most respondents maintained that the new oil sector provided few jobs for women. "Women were hardly employed to work in the pipeline project, and even now there are few women working in the oil companies" (Adamou, pipeline construction worker). Prostitution is seen as an affirmative action by women to access a share of the oil wealth. Some men argue that they spend weeks in the oil fields. When they come to town, they want to enjoy themselves, but their families are far away. To them, sex workers offer the pleasure and family atmosphere which helps them relax and enjoy themselves.

Oil exploitation is often associated with manifold forms of concrete social and political change in various places and institutional environments (Behrends and Schareika 2010; Behrends 2011). The influx of Western oil companies and stream of foreign migrant workers into the new petrodollar nation have transformed local social structures and led to deep social and cultural transformations with divergent local outcomes in the oil communities. Among the various social transformations that affected the social fabric of oil localities in Chad is an increase of sexual services, as well as an upsurge in autoimmune disease syndrome (AIDS) and other sexually transmissible diseases (STDs) (Pemunta 2013; Shombong 2010, 6). This same scenario vividly replicates the setting of the mines in Natal, South Africa (Hunter 2009).

Oil rents impact on social institutions through money flows into communities in which large sums of money were previously uncommon.

Although women were always engaged in sexual activities in communities around the pipeline, the relationships formed were not based on financial interest but rather on a system of mutual exchange. It was common for a man to have more than one mistress in a village. In return for the sex and care he got from his mistresses, he assisted them in clearing the farm and providing meat, firewood and other forms of support. We observed workers hanging out in bars and propositioning women irrespective of their matrimonial status. Some women were literally "swept off their feet" and left their husbands or local boyfriends for wealthy pipeline construction workers.

Social institutions based on cultural norms and social relations became monetized (Hoinathy 2014). In Chad, the payment of individual compensation for landed property instigated women to claim their right to land and hence compensation. Some of the few women who had jobs in oil companies parleyed their newly acquired wealth into attracting local men of their choice for marriage. Unlike in the past, wealthy Chadian women increasingly began to make spousal choices. In the past, when a young man in Moundou, the second largest city in Chad, found a woman, both started a new life as a couple at little or no price. Marriages are now mostly based on the male spouse's ability to pay an exorbitant bride price (Hoinathy 2014).

The adoption of neoliberal reforms restructured social relationships between men and women in most of Africa with differential effects. While young men struggled to make ends meet by entering the informal economy (at times through petty crimes) or becoming street vendors in the city, their female counterparts put their resources in the thriving sexual economy with a positive effect for both material resources and money. Many parents became unable to provide for their children, while men became unable to afford the bride price so as to get married culturally (Groes-Green 2014, 243; Hunter 2009). Changes orchestrated by neoliberal economic reforms led to deepening urban poverty; galloping unemployment rates; the reversal of gender roles; the reconfiguration of gender, class and race; and the disempowerment of young men and their inability to live up to the "breadwinner ideal" and to marry in "the traditional way" (Groes-Green 2013, 104).

Foreign aid and foreign direct investment including in the oil sector has led to the growth of a new middle class and the arrival of relatively wealthy white men. It was against this backdrop that young women flocked to N'Djamena to cash in on their erotic resources. Economic changes shape

and reshape the negotiation of affect and exchange, as Cole and Thomas describe in the case of Madagascar where high unemployment and economic hardship led to reduced marriage rates as men became unwilling to forge marriage ties and to support families (Cole and Thomas 2009, 24). Furthermore, poverty led to an increase of the commodification of intimacy and the simultaneous transformation of gendered relationships: young men became unable to live up to the expectations of gendered ideas of support and masculinity. Some women invested in parallel and multiple relationships in order to satisfy their affective and material needs as well as their desires for consumption (Cole and Thomas 2009, 127; Hunter 2009).

The oil exploitation and subsequent increase in local money circulation has not only attracted female sex workers but also male sex workers for whom a market niche exists. Male sex workers have attracted the attention of law enforcement officers who now make efforts to police non-normative sexual behavior. Although same-sex relationships have always existed in Africa, there seems to have been an increase in male-to-male public sexual practices in Chad with the arrival of the oil wealth and the influx of expats. In N'Djamena, some wealthy women also purchase sexual services from men. In the midst of significant political, economic and social changes, neoliberalism has resulted in the reconfiguration of affective relations and sexual intimacy, as well as stimulated the consumption of different varieties of sexual services, including same-sex intimacy (Cole and Thomas 2009). A conjuncture between macro-level socioeconomic and political factors and the adoption of neoliberal reforms led to rural–urban and transnational migration to Chad, including Cameroonian women with diverse family backgrounds.

Structural and Family Causes for Women's Migration

Chad shares several trans-border ethnic groups and therefore cultural affinities, as well as a porous border in the north with Cameroon. There is easy movement of people, goods and services, as well as multiple formal and informal channels of communication between the two countries. Although both countries are members of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC), which allows the free movement of people, goods and services between member states, endemic corruption among border control agents also facilitates illegal movement across

borders. Traveling by road and rail are the most widely used means of transport. Buses regularly run from Yaounde, Kousseri and Touboro at the border of Chad to most parts of the country. Most women leave Yaounde by train to Ngoundere and then continue through Maroua to Kousseri before crossing the border into Chad. In both Chad and Cameroon, the exchange of sexual services for money is illegal and sex workers are not targeted by STD/HIV/AIDS programs. In December 2013, when one of the authors arrived in N'Djamena, his contact, Yves, a Chadian man, told him the following when asked about the local nightlife:

> Walk regularly at night and you will almost never come across a woman from Cameroon who is not a prostitute. They have their own little activities [businesses] during the day, but when night falls, they turn into tigresses.

Different authors have outlined how worldwide a complex conjuncture of varied family-related and personal circumstances can push socioeconomically marginalized women into sex work (Walby 2011; Jaggar 2006; Hofmann 2014). Many women choose to enter the sex industry as a result of "a complicated mix of structural conditions, feminized care responsibilities, and exceptional hardships" (Hofmann 2014, 78). The women we talked to had diverse family backgrounds and motivations for becoming sex workers. By educational background, ten out of the 11 participants were school dropouts, while one sex worker held a Bachelor's degree in marketing. In terms of religious affiliation, six claimed they were Christians from diverse regions of Cameroon, while four were Muslims from the northern Cameroon region that is close to the Cameroon–Chad border.[5]

The pipeline project led to a major shift in the migration of sex workers from Cameroon's main cities of Yaoundé (Center) and Douala (Littoral) to oil enclave communities on the route of the Chad–Cameroon pipeline. Alongside pipeline workers with whom some sex workers had sexual liaisons, they began migrating toward the route of the pipeline. Other women, however, moved independently and directly to oil communities in Chad and to the capital, N'Djamena. In their quest for respect, most of these sex workers who are transnational caretakers for their kin struggle to ensure their families' wellbeing through the remittances that they send home. The migratory trajectories of some of these sex workers are shaped by sexual–monetary relationships with oil workers and obligations embedded in a morality of exchange toward their dependents in Cameroon (for a similar example see Groes-Green 2014). Accordingly, some of these

women found migration to Chad attractive, because when the construction phase of the oil project ended, few men remained working at the local oil industry along the pipeline. Cameroonian sex workers in Chad follow the discovery of new oil wells; whenever new oil wells are being discovered and workers move, new "sexscapes" (Brennan 2004, 16) crop up in the encampments.

While a convergence of family-related and personal circumstances pushed most of the women into the profession of sex work, it is fundamental to acknowledge the individual and collective agency of sex workers rather than viewing them as "victims" (Sen 1995, 103). One of the women we talked to had been the victim of rape in an arranged marriage, and she reported the lack of sexual satisfaction as her motivation for becoming a sex worker. She also stated that she became a sex worker in order to take revenge on men:

> I was raped and I underwent rehabilitation, but the rehabilitation did not make an impact. I have become obsessed with sexual intercourse which has contributed to my becoming a street girl. This way I am able to take revenge on men for my rape. My grievance against the man who raped me was the main reason behind my decision. Now I don't really have a choice, just like many before and after me did not voluntarily wish to be street women. They were also sent to the road by circumstances (sex worker Maimouna, 23 years).

Three of the sex workers we talked to were single mothers who took care of their children through transnational arrangements and four were single women without children but with family members to provide for. Two were divorcees, while one was a widow. The widow had been dispossessed and thrown out of the family home following the death of her husband with six children to take care of. Structural causes such as the lack of employment opportunities and the inexistence of a social security system seem to be the overwhelming motivational factor for women taking up prostitution on either a part- or full-time basis. Anna, a 26-year-old woman whom we met at Quartier Harlem, stated, "I am without work and have nobody to provide for my needs. I left my village and came here in the hope of finding work, meeting my needs and those of my family members."

One of the two divorcees, Marlyse from Cameroon's Center Region—21, with three years of experience in the N'Djamena sex industry—reported that she decided to become a prostitute in protest against having been forced by her poverty-stricken parents into an early marriage.

She had been betrothed to a wealthy 60-year-old polygynous man as the fourth wife. She had all the material things that make life worth living but lacked sexual attention and pleasure.

> Compared to his other three wives, I was like a child. They commanded me as they wished. I really felt bad. I had everything at my disposal but never had a man to satisfy me sexually. Besides being as old as he was, I never experienced sweet love. My husband was not even romantic. I had servants, a car but something was missing. When I started going out and having parallel sexual encounters I knew for sure that my husband was not the best. Whenever I needed him, he was never there and he had three other wives in other towns (sex worker Marlyse).

She hangs out in bars and either takes clients home or accompanies them to their hotel rooms. Tired of cheating on him and afraid she might be caught and that it would bring disgrace onto her family, Marlyse divorced her husband and decided to leave for N'Djamena incognito so that she could enjoy sex and simultaneously make some money. She used her contacts to move to N'Djamena where her friends were making money from prostitution following the oil boom in the country, and for her own safety, since her ex-husband had promised her "hell." Her emphasis on her own sexual pleasure suggests that her sexual-affective needs were never taken into consideration during the arranged marriage.[6] The second divorcee, Zenaba, who is 28 years old, hails from the predominantly Islamic northern Cameroon region. She is a mother of three children and allegedly became a sex worker against her will. While her early marriage led to the loss of her virginity to her husband, by divorcing, she catapulted herself out of the matrimonial market. As a divorced woman, Zenaba is more likely to remain single for life because she is looked upon as an outcast. Resorting to prostitution as a means for survival was the only way out she saw. Zenaba initially sold sex on a part-time basis just to meet the needs of her children who are in the care of her mother. Later, she became endeared to her clients and became a full-time sex worker. Whenever her two regular clients who are married civil servants and with whom she has maintained sexual liaisons over the past four years are away, she is in search of any opportunistic clients.

Two of our respondents grew up as orphans in Cameroon. One of them, Fanezaba, is the first child in a family of six. As the oldest, she is socially and culturally expected to become the provider for her siblings. Compelled by dire family-related circumstances, she took up sex work:

> It was the difficult circumstances I passed through in life that pushed me into prostitution. Taking the decision to become a prostitute was not an easy task. What I enjoy most is that it helps me to meet up with my daily needs. I do not have to go around stealing or begging. It goes with the saying that I use what I freely have to get what I desperately need. It helps me take care of the school, health and daily needs of my younger siblings … whom our parents left. I get around XAF 20,000–30,000 (US$40–60) a night (sex worker Fanezaba, 28 years).

Selling Sex in N'Djamena

African sex workers of different ages and nationalities are a visible social category in Quartier Kabalaye (also called petty Douala), the red light district of N'Djamena. Always elegantly and seductively dressed, they either take up positions in or cruise in small groups in bars, restaurants, inns, discos, hotels, and nightclubs seeking clients. Upon arriving at a nightclub or bar, women make a quick inspection of the dance floor and the seats to identify any potential men of interest. The *attaquants* (which in the local African context means a struggler or a hustler), as Cameroonian sex workers refer to themselves, use seductive endearments like *chérie* (sweetheart) and *chouchou* (darling) to *attaque* (entice, seduce) men of interest. Figuratively, *attaquant* means a man or woman who has left his or her place of origin and migrated in search of social mobility and a better life. The designation also implies that they are hustlers trying to make ends meet. In other words, they are out to seduce men and extract money and other material things from them for their wellbeing and that of their kin. As an analogy to the attack in a football contest, their aim is to "score goals" (earn money) for themselves. It is also a reference to their aggressive entrepreneurial business strategy of "attacking" (enticing) men by boldly walking up to them in the red light district and advertising themselves. Apart from soliciting drinks from men as a way of calling attention to themselves, some constantly take the dance floor, while others sit conspicuously at the counter. They are always ready to *attaque* (seduce) any man in sight, even for a one-night stand. Depending on their popularity and entrepreneurship, some are able to have erotic encounters with as many as three clients a night.

Some sex workers—mostly from the outskirts of the city—pay for rooms to nearby landlords at negotiable rates: 50 percent of the amount paid by each client is shared between the landlord who owns the room and the security guards who protect the premises. Sex workers provide a

variety of sexual services to meet up with the needs of diverse clients. One sex worker stated that she performs vaginal intercourse including an oral sex foreplay for XAF 50,000 (US$100), for oral sex alone, she charges XAF 10,000 (US$20), for anal sex XAF 40,000 (US$80), and for vaginal intercourse without oral sex XAF 5,000 (US$10). A standard commercial sex contract in Chad is limited to just penetration and ejaculation without any foreplay. Extra services including oral sex and foreplay are generally not part of the contract and therefore attract extra charges. Oral sex is culturally perceived as unhygienic, as well as associated with magical practices. Some sex workers are reported to steal the semen of rich men for magical purposes; and some men are also alleged to be involved in mystical practices, which prohibit them from having vaginal sex. Sex workers are willing to provide oral sex but charge extremely high prices—making it far more expensive than actual penetration. Oral sex is also sold on its own, without vaginal penetration, and pays far better than vaginal penetration. Cameroonian women have specialized in providing oral sex in Chad, explaining their popularity in the local sex trade. In fact, the provision of oral sex distinguishes Cameroonian sex workers from their Chadian counterparts, explaining why they attract more clients. "Flesh against flesh" sex (intercourse without condoms), which exposes both parties to the risk of HIV/AIDS and other STDs, is the most expensive. The belief in instant enjoyment and later death constitutes the "tragic tendency to prioritize pleasure and intimacy over sexual protection" (Manuel 2005; Groes-Green 2013, 110). The different varieties of sexual services usually involve the granting of limited access to different parts of the body without emotional commitment. Some sex workers (sex worker/bar-tender) supplement their meager incomes by combining their work in bars with commercial sex work. Upon arrival, some live in brothels and pay XAF 10,000–20,000 (US$40) per week to the brothel owner.

The centrally located Quartier Kabalaye—a miniature Cameroonian town within N'Djamena city—is a hub of prostitution. Mostly inhabited by Cameroonian transnational migrants, it has restaurants serving dishes from almost every part of Cameroon, as well as brothels owned by both Cameroonian and Chadian nationals. Still in the center of the city, in the streets, bars and nightclubs located in proximity of Kempinski Hotel N'Djamena, Novotel N'Djamena La Tchadienne, Hotel La Residence and Hotel de Ville de N'Djamena are the so-called "high-quality girls." These *jaguar nana* (high-class prostitutes) are both foreigners as well as local Chadian women. Unlike street prostitutes, some operate from

the comfort of high-class hotel suites, such as Novotel N'Djamena La Tchadienne, Le Chari and Le Palmerais, where mostly foreigners lodge. The lowest-paid sexual service they provide is XAF 5,000 (US$20). The price can be bargained up to XAF 50,000 (US$100) and beyond, depending on the entrepreneurial skills or experience of the sex worker and her bodily assets. One Cameroonian sex worker who regularly hangs out around Novotel N'Djamena La Tchadienne stated, "Most men who come here prefer those who have big asses like mine. Some of them also go for big breasts, which I also have. That is why I make much money here at the end of every night. My price can even go higher when I promise the man extra skills in bed including oral sex as a prelude to intercourse." Asked where the lovemaking takes place, she stated, "Most men prefer to do it in their cars, but most often we go to the hotel. But some of those who come here do not like going to hotels probably because they do not want to be identified, that is why they prefer to do it in their cars."

Most professional sex workers maintain parallel relationships; some meet men in bars and have casual sex with them at the *auberge*, which is an appendix of some of the bars. Their apartments are sponsored by men for whom they often cook when they come to visit. They call themselves "boyfriend" and "girlfriend," not client and prostitute. In these relationships, emotional, sexual and monetary favors are often intertwined (Groes-Green 2014, 241; Hunter 2009). In their absence, the sex workers also have casual sex with other men. "This flexible sexual economy permits the women to avoid dependence on any one single man" and therefore maintain a sense of independence (Groes-Green 2014, 241). Similar to the Malagasy women in Groes-Green's example who maintain parallel relationships with both European and Malagasy men, the women we met were able to skillfully and tactfully manage a range of relationships simultaneously. Jennifer Cole has drawn attention to the ways in which women divide multiple desires among different men when both affective connections and material resources are not obtainable from the same relationship (Cole 2009, 127). In South Africa, women forge multiple relationships in their quest for the "three C's": cash, cell phones and cars" (Hunter 2009). While some relationships are merely for economic gain and material welfare, others are based on emotional attachment and physical desire. Contrary to common assumptions made in the Euro-American cultural context, "instrumental exchanges do not signal the end of love," but can instead indicate the mutual entanglement between affect and exchange (Hunter 2009, 36).

The geographical contiguity of Cameroon's northern region to Chad correlates with the observation that prostitution generally, and especially

in the Global South, often involves some element of movement away from the place of origin (Shah 2014; Pemunta 2011a, b). On one hand, women prefer to sell sex away from home because of the stigma associated with transactional sex work (Pemunta 2011b). On the other hand, this is also a resource question since sex workers move to where their clients have money.

> In the community where I live it is really difficult to socialize with people. All know that I am a prostitute. I carry a stigma with me and sometimes feel socially excluded. Some people do not want their daughters to socialize with me. They feel I am a bad influence (sex worker Fanezaba).

The stigma associated with sex work also explains why most of these women call themselves "business women." Some of their family members and acquaintances in their home country Cameroon know about their profession. However, some of those who are aware that they sell sex and reap benefits from them "construct an economy of appearances that helps paper over the contradictions that structure their relationships to one another" (Cole 2014, 90).

While sex work is not inherently traumatizing, it is the stigma associated with sex work that creates psychological difficulties for sex workers (Vanwesenbeeck 2005). The stigma attached to sex work derives essentially from the normativity of the institution of marriage and family. Sexwork is often perceived as its negation and as such disruptive of conventional readings of the public and private. The selling of sexual intimacy, argues Sophie Day, "confounds the separation between a public economy and a private realm of socially significant relationships. In this view, the realm of the market is contaminated by women who live their lives in public, and the realm of the home is likewise threatened by the introduction of money and economic thinking" (Day 2007, 41). This relates to what Viviana Zelizer calls the mingling of seemingly incompatible worlds of "the intimate" and "the economic." In Zelizer's view, however, "people lead connected lives, plenty of economic activity goes into creating, defining, and sustaining social ties." This speaks to the mutually constitutive nature of intimacy and exchange (Zelizer 2005, 2; Cole 2009, 113; Hunter 2009, 36).

In Chad, sex workers are socially stigmatized for allegedly fueling the spread of HIV, and they are looked down upon for being "bad women" or *femmes libres* (free women). Phil Hubbard (1998) has drawn attention to the fact that the construction of community is often predicated on the exclusion of "immoral" sex workers, who are "othered" and only allowed access to marginal sites. Sex workers told us that they face frequent physical

and verbal abuse from men on the street, discrimination on the housing market and depreciation from church members.

One of the most significant factors that undermine the conditions of sex work in addition to stigma is State repression. In Chad, the police and *gendarmerie* often engage in ad hoc, short-term, human resource-intensive sweeps or crackdowns on sex workers. For instance, on 22 November 2011, in different parts of the capital, a police crackdown led to the arrest of 236 prostitutes. Among those arrested were 105 Chadian nationals and 135 women of different African nationalities (Cameroon, Congo, Nigeria and Niger). While Cameroonians benefit from access to free movement, widespread corruption on the border within the CEMAC zone has facilitated entry for sex workers from non-CEMAC member countries. Law enforcement officers often demand sexual favors or cash in on sex workers. This resonates with the Zambian context, in which laws prohibit the facilitation of sex work and related exploitation, and laws and by-laws aimed at controlling the potential nuisance or offence caused to the general public by sex work have been enacted. The effective implementations of these laws, however, pose serious challenges for sex workers (Meerkotter 2012, 52).

Female sex workers increasingly see themselves as entrepreneurial subjects, and they have adopted entrepreneurial ethics to achieve upward social mobility. With the money gained from sex work, they aim to advance the wellbeing of themselves and their families. Women are willing to compete for available economic opportunities (Oksala 2011, 479). As McNay (2010, 60–61) eloquently states, neoliberal governmentality produces subjects who act as individual entrepreneurs across all dimensions of their lives. As sex worker Fanezaba conceded,

> Whenever a man stands in front of me, all that I see is money. I have lost all sexual feelings and sentiments of affection. Each time a man stands in front of me; what immediately comes to my mind is how to make money out of him.

Similar utterances were made by other respondents:

> Our motto is making money from clients, not love; although we also have lovers among our clients who at times, help us pay our rents (sex worker Maimouna).

> One comes across all categories of clients: pedestrians, hawkers, businessmen, politicians etc. It is all about them paying and me giving them what

> they want. Muslim men are the best clients. Their sex does not last. They easily ejaculate (sex worker Marlyse).

The foregoing statements articulate the intricate connections between exchange, sex, affect, and power. The ability of these women to extract money from their clients is the source of their power. Men typically exchange gifts and money for sexual and domestic services and women's labor. In the life world of sex workers, affect and exchange are mutually constitutive: "They take the flow of resources obtained from one relationship and connect into the flow of resources into another" (Cole 2009, 131). Similarly, Mark Hunter demonstrates the constitutive nature of intimacy and exchange: "practices that are simultaneously material and meaningful" (Hunter 2009, 36; Groes-Green 2014).

While transactional sex can be seen as a strategy for the achievement of the project of self-actualization, which is imbricated in the desire for individual economic wellbeing and upward social mobility, women are not self-serving subjects. Despite their diverse motivations for entering the sex trade, most women are breadwinners for both their immediate families and extended family members. Within the context of neoliberal governmentality, sex work can be both a site of oppression and exploitation as well as a stepping-stone to personal social mobility (Hofmann 2014). Sex work is intertwined in both ambiguous and simultaneous processes: while it provides an avenue for personal empowerment and agency, individuals must subject themselves to a neoliberal market regime (ibid.).

Strategies of Adaptation to the Market: A Form of Agency?

This section argues that various strategies of adaptation to the neoliberal economic context involving the entanglement of consumption, the economy and the affective (Hunter 2009; Cole 2009; Groes-Green 2014) constitute forms of situated agency. Within the context of neoliberalism, viewing sex workers as situated agents means attributing to them the ability to reason and act in novel ways despite the backdrop that they necessarily inherit, which provides a context for their creative innovations. Situated agents always set out against a backdrop of some social discourse or tradition, but because they are not wholly constructed by it, they can

create traditions and practices through own reasoning and modify the very backdrop that influences them (Choi 2007; Sen 1985).

Although the sex workers overwhelmingly stated that prostitution can be a dangerous and challenging activity with social, psychological and health hazards, they have no other option to make such sums of money. Beguiled by the petrol money in Chad, 23-year-old Maimouna followed in the footsteps of her friend Jane who came to N'Djamena two years before her. She shared an apartment with her for the first six months and served in Jane's makeshift restaurant during the day. Thereafter, she got her own apartment. As she advised, "The first thing one has to keep in mind is that she (the *attaquant*) is facing a lot of difficulties and that prostitution is an immediate solution."

The various strategies of adaptation to their harsh working conditions used by Cameroonian sex workers include, firstly, taking advantage of "sexually weak men" who reach orgasm quickly, secondly, the adoption of a dual accumulation strategy through parallel relationships, thirdly, cashing in on their exoticization by Chadian men, fourthly, the presentation of a "false self" using "big language," as well as the use of magic to outsmart other competitors and to keep rich men for themselves. The various techniques used to outsmart other competitors have resonances with what Groes-Green (2014) describes as the practice of "putting of men inside the bottle" in Maputo and Mozambique, meaning the seduction and erotic and emotional satisfaction of older men (patrons) by young women (*curtidoras*) with the aim to extract money and other material goods and services for both themselves and their family members. The women combine advice on heterosexual relationships (transmission of erotic knowledge) provided by elder kinswomen and love potions from healers. The transfer of rituals into the urban environment is used to increase emotional control over men and to make them docile in sexual–emotional exchanges with the motive of becoming showered by them with money and gifts (Groes-Green 2014, 245).

The "gendered triads of reciprocity," which involve men, senior female kin and young women challenge Western stereotypes of female victims and patriarchal structures in Africa. As a central component of sexual–economic exchanges, although these relationships involve mutual dependency, the women's erotic charms are constitutive of their agency. The women are not just distributors of accumulated wealth, but they also strategically invest in their own social relationships (Groes-Green 2013, 102). We have also found parallels to Cole's study of Malagasy women

who forge relationships with French men to build a life-sustaining flow of material resources and connections as a marker of their status and wealth, while simultaneously managing competing horizons of expectations from their French husbands and Malagasy kin. In their interactions with their French husbands, race, gender, kinship and reproduction intersect (Cole 2014).

The Cameroonian sex workers we met in N'Djamena are transmigrants who live in two worlds. While having established lives in Chad, they remain active participants in the lives and for the wellbeing of their kin in Cameroon with whom they keep contact through telephone, Skype and Viber, and to whom they often send remittances for upkeep, healthcare, school fees and investment. Apart from continuous communication, they often go home to attend social and cultural events of their families and of close acquaintances. Women use their short-term transactions from sex work to invest and thereby "to contribute to the long-term purpose of satisfying the needs of family members" (Bloch and Parry 1989; Groes-Green 2014, 246).

Stories often flourish in N'Djamena of some sex workers having cast a spell on particular well-to-do men whom they constantly oblige to comply with their requests and command according to their whims and caprices. Maria, in her early thirties, popularly known for audaciously flaunting her breasts, was hated by her colleagues for always "being seen first" and for having at least three clients every night. She exonerated herself from witchcraft suspicions by highlighting her entrepreneurialism: she stated that apart from always dressing fashionably, with expensive and beautiful hair extensions, she always set her traps of seduction well by winking, talking to men in a low-pitched voice and hypnotizing them with her enticing movements. She often danced erotically with other men to provoke jealousy in the man of her interest. Maria was well skilled in using "bodily gestures to win the attention of men" (Groes-Green 2013, 109).

The women generally frequent various bars and nightclubs, and some of them are contracted as "bait" through which the proprietors of sex businesses attract "big clients." A large number of middle-class and rich customers who are keen to have younger lovers or girlfriends usually flock to clubs where there are attractive single women (Groes-Green 2014, 243). Women entice men using a spectrum of bodily strategies that foregrounds their femininity to achieve their aim of accumulation. Sometimes women incessantly wink at men in order to attract their attention. At other times, they will spontaneously invite a shy man to the dance floor, hoping

that he will make a "gesture" (Pemunta 2011a, b, 53). They also dress with clothes that reveal large parts of the body such as breasts, buttocks, thighs and belly as a strategy to ensnare men.

> I learned to do things that will catch the attention of men: wearing sexy dresses, exposing my body and to be very bold, I learned how to take drugs. The road [street sex work] is another school one has to learn and be extra shameless and attractive. One has to be free of all forms of sentiments, wear clothes that expose the intimate parts and draw on the attention of men (sex worker Taty, 26 years).

Additionally, sex workers take advantage of "sexually weak men" by being able to control the time available for the encounter (McDowell 2009). Women are skilled in scamming clients with lovemaking noises, such as hisses and gasps, meant to signal that the men are "killing" them during the sexual encounter. Most sex workers testified that they preferred having sex with Muslim men over men from southern Chad. Women identify Muslim clients from ethnic markers most (Muslims wear the *jalabiya*).[7] Women reported that their Muslim clients commonly have little formal education and speak only the local version of Arabic. Most southerners, in contrast, dress like "Westerners" with jeans or shorts and coats, have varying levels of formal education and speak French. While the latter are believed to have long penises and be sexually more active, Muslims are alleged to be sexually weak and therefore easily ejaculate or even have pre-sexual ejaculations, rapidly ending the session and requiring the re-negotiation for "another round."

> Our best clients are the Muslims. They do ejaculate fast, and sometimes they ejaculate even before penetration. Before one can even take them to bed, they already have an erection and as soon as we start having sex, they ejaculate very fast. But the guys from the South, they are stronger when it comes to sex and sometimes for them to ejaculate it really takes long and can really be painful (sex worker Awa, 23 years).

Some sex workers have specialized in foreign entrepreneurs (Europeans, Chinese and Africans from other countries) or have adopted a dual strategy to compensate the fluctuations of the sex market (Pemunta 2011b, 59; Cole 2014, 87). Jennifer Cole reports that some foreign men seeking their fortunes in Madagascar forge relationships with local women to access a myriad of precious forms of capital (connections, networks and

opportunities) (Cole 2014, 87). This counts true in Chad as well; since foreigners are usually charged high taxes for operating their businesses in Chad, they often use their love affairs with local women to set up companies and benefit from her connections in doing business.

Additionally, Cameroonian sex workers are cashing in on their exoticization by Chadian men, negotiating for extremely high sex fees at the expense of their local counterparts. Chadian men's preference for foreign sexual liaisons has led to a simmering permanent conflict between the transnational sex workers and their local counterparts. The latter accuse the former of taking all their men. However, the Chadian men we spoke to told us that they preferred Cameroonian sex workers, because apart from dressing seductively, they found Cameroonian women more sexually appealing in bed and more willing to provide a broader range of sexual services.

A top military man and a regular at N'Djamena's red light district confided in us how his vulnerability to the sexual allure of Cameroonian sex workers was sparked by the "high dose of sex" (implying sexual skill) he once received from a Cameroonian woman. Impressed, he made her a permanent mistress by paying her rent and providing for her upkeep. In one particular occasion, he fondly remembers having asked her to bring his *jalabiya* from the wardrobe and instantly increased her payment for services well rendered. He concluded with the statement that "once you go Cameroonian, you will never turn back."

Men's accounts repeatedly stated that they found the transnational Cameroonian sex workers more sexually skilled than their local counterparts. Men confided in us that they felt uncomfortable about Muslim Chadian female sex workers wearing their hijabs while in brothels or even while making love. Furthermore, they replicated the culturally entrenched belief that Cameroonian sex workers, especially those from Yaounde in the Center Region, "know how to sex well." Unlike northern Cameroon, which is sexually conservative and where pre-marital virginity is the norm and early marriages are common (Pemunta and Fubah 2015), the Center Region is reputed for sexual permissiveness and promiscuity in the popular imagination. In this part of Cameroon, some poor native men allegedly tolerate that their wives have affairs with other men for money. Furthermore, women from that region are reputed for migrating to neighboring countries—particularly Gabon and Equatorial Guinea—as sex workers. They are believed to be well schooled in sexual techniques, beauty strategies and the art of womanly charm, thereby enhancing their attractiveness for men and accentuating the conflict with their local counterparts.

A further business strategy that women employed involves the presentation of a "false self." This includes a combination of techniques: not presenting themselves as being desperate, not "sleeping with small boys" or with "just anybody," pretending to engage in "informal recreation" and the use of "big language" (lies). These strategies give the sex workers a positive self-image in front of some of their clients and simultaneously permit them to have a higher stake in negotiating the sexual contract. As sex worker Awa stated, "One also has to learn to use 'BIG LANGUAGE,' which has nothing to do with one's true self." The use of "big language" by sex workers corresponds with Erving Goffman's dramaturgical analysis that applies to the theatrical performance underpinning daily face-to-face interactions. According to Goffman, when an individual comes into contact with other people, the individual will attempt to control or guide the impression by changing or fixing his or her setting, appearance and manner (Smith 2006, 33–34; Ritzer 2008). In this situation, the sex worker pretends to be rich and come from a wealthy and well-behaved family that owns landed property, including houses that are rented out in order to entice the client to offer a bigger sum of money in exchange for her services. She gives the impression that she is not desperate and does not sleep around with "small boys." We overheard various statements from sex workers meant to reflect their presumed high status to some clients who showed interest in them: "I am not a cheap girl for XAF 5,000 (US$10)," "I cannot engage in sexual intercourse with children" (meaning poor people) and "I live in an apartment that cost XAF 200,000 (US$400) per month … the XAF 5,000 (US$20) you are offering has no value." A sex worker may present herself as being highly connected with cabinet ministers, popular businessmen and politicians. Clients will be lured into paying more for her services because she has had sexual relationships with a top personality and is therefore "not just a street girl." In some cases, women actually use their sexual relationships with top military men as a security belt. Being associated with a military man commands respect and creates fear. If a client behaves violently, they will frame him with the threat that their military contact will act to protect his "girlfriend."

This concatenation of value-adding strategies is based on men's identities and constructions of masculinity. Keeping multiple girlfriends and spending money on them is constitutive of local masculinity, and both married and unmarried men often show off with women among their peers as a marker of their social status. In companionate marriages, extramarital

affairs are seen as a way of gaining prestige among peers because "such affairs presume that the man has enough resources to support outside women, and because they evidence sexual vitality" (Cole and Thomas 2009, 26; Groes-Green 2014, 243).

Another strategy used by women in the attempt to increase their incomes was the use of magic and the occult to outsmart competitors in the sex trade as well as recruit and keep high-paying clients ("good clients") (Pemunta 2011b, 53), and as an insurance against old age for elderly sex workers. "After all, men like and are constantly searching for new experiences with other women" (bar man Jean-Pierre). There are widespread allegations that some of the sex workers use charms to capture, hypnotize and keep some rich men for themselves. Since most clients are always on the lookout for new arrivals, sex workers' incomes are always threatened and unstable. Sex worker Emma confessed that after charming her client Joseph, a 36-year-old engineer working for the Chadian National Brewery Company, he divorced his wife for her to move in, but she was hesitant to live with him as his wife. Moving in as a wife would make her solely dependent on him, unlike before when she was still able to maintain parallel relationships with other men behind his back. For the preparation of the charm, she allegedly provided ritual objects including hens, a goat, an alligator, a tortoise, palm wine, a padlock, a pot, a bottle of whisky, a piece of cloth, a machete and the skin of a tiger, as well as XAF 350,000 (US$700) as fee for the services of the witchdoctor. She committed herself to a spiritual path and was given a potion to drop into Joseph's food or drink upon their next meeting. She was also given some leaves to put inside her mattress before sleeping with him to prevent him from ever sleeping with any other woman. She locked the padlock and threw it into the Atlantic Ocean and dropped the key in a pit toilet. To maintain the charm's potency, she said that she would reinvigorate it every two years, and she has been able to keep Joseph to herself for the past seven years: "Until that lock and the key are found and opened, Joseph will continue to be mine."

This form of magical entrepreneurship resonates with the experiences of Cole's Malagasy female migrants in France. The women who end up marrying a French husband fear that the limitation on sexual-affective relationships with one man only could put them in a situation of dependency and end the economic advancement they are aspiring for (and it sometimes does). Whereas before, when they had sexual-affective relationships with many men, they experienced that as a greater security (Cole 2009).

In that sense, the use of magic to dazzle particular men represents sex workers' attempts to secure the continuity of money flow and economic advancement when they are about to rely on one man only (rather than many men, as before).

Conclusion

This chapter has articulated the interplay between Cameroonian transnational sex workers' lack of marketable skills, the lure of the riches accruing from oil wealth in Chad and the neoliberal circumstances that shaped their desire to take up prostitution. The women's entry into the profession of sex work was intertwined with their backgrounds characterized by social and economic marginalization, lack of education and chronic unemployment affecting generations of the same family. The economic dominance of European powers perpetuates inequality, poverty and hardship in the African region. The structural conditions of neoliberal dispossession (e.g. through land grab by European and American transnational corporations) have diminished women's possibilities for subsistence in their home regions. While the neoliberal economic context has influenced these transnational sex workers' desire to take up the sex trade, they should be seen as agents who have developed complex ways to ply their trade, involving an intricate blend of bodily language and magic practices in order to attract and maintain clients. Intimate relationships have accordingly become imbricated in and mediated by broader political, economic and capitalist processes (Constable 2009). As agents, sex workers are able to strategically reshape the field and influence the actions of their clients, all with the hope of making more money, which will allow them to save up and eventually leap out of poverty by investing in their family members.

In a Marxist perspective, prostitution was captured by a metaphor that represents two sorts of bodies: a laboring body and a desiring body. The former was represented by the prostitute who sells sexual services and the latter by the client who seeks to satisfy sexual and emotional desires on the market. Situated agents always set out against a particular socioeconomic background that is shaped by discourse and tradition, but because they are not wholly determined by it; to a degree, they can sometimes shape the social context of interaction in their favor. A sex worker cannot be perceived as a laboring body only—she too is a desiring body. The sex workers we met desired social mobility, a good life and the advancement of their families through the provision of education to their children or

relatives, as well as to be involved in conspicuous consumption among other things. In neoliberal capitalism, both wealth accumulation and processes of dispossession are expanding, thereby intensifying what is being commodified, because people are increasingly left without any alternative means of subsistence and must sell whatever they can at any price offered on the market. Selling sex can be one way through which migrant women from Cameroon adapt to the harsh realities of the neoliberal economy. Once previous forms of subsistence have been wiped out, and other more promising economic opportunities are out of reach, sexual-affective economic strategies can be the most effective way of changing one's own condition for the better.

Notes

1. An Islamic extremist group based in northeastern Nigeria, also active in Chad, Niger and northern Cameroon that is seeking to create a caliphate in this region.
2. They have a hyphenated identity. During the day, they sell food in makeshift structures, but at night, they are sex workers.
3. XAF is the currency code for Central African Franc, the currency both in Cameroon and Chad.
4. All names of sex workers have been changed to guarantee their anonymity.
5. Although Muslims and Christians are found in every region, Christians are concentrated primarily in the southern and western regions. Muslims are concentrated in the three northern regions: Adamawa, Far North and North, while most Christians live in the remaining seven regions: Northwest, Southwest (Anglophone regions), West, East, South, Center and Littoral.
6. Despite regional and ethnic variation in marriage practices, child/forced marriages often occur when poor parents betroth their daughters usually to elderly men to avoid the costs related to raising them. Forced under-age marriages are widespread in northern Cameroon—the closest region to Chad—which coincidentally is the poorest of Cameroon's ten regions with a higher rate of illiterate women and deeply entrenched gendered poverty (see Pemunta and Fubah 2015).
7. A traditional Egyptian garment native to the Nile Valley. It has a wide cut, no collar (in some case no buttons) and long, wide sleeves.

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CHAPTER 7

The Use of "Life-enabling" Practices Among *Waria*: Vulnerability, Subsistence, and Identity in Contemporary Yogyakarta

Néstor Nuño Martínez

Introduction

Since the eighteenth century, states have been developing different technologies of power to subjugate bodies and control populations (Foucault 1990). The fall of the Soviet Bloc and the progressive spread and establishment of certain neoliberal practices over the world (economic liberalization, restriction of liberties, policies of privatization, and austerity within the public sector) have led to new forms of governmentality. As Nikolas Rose points out, over the last two decades, the values of freedom and individualism have become the main resources that guide people's actions in the world (Rose 1999, 61).

The governability of the passions of the self, shaped by technologies and practices of massive commercial consumption, aggressive advertisements, and TV programs that emphasize the rational choice of desires related to welfare and lifestyles (Hardt and Negri 2000; Rose 1999, 44–46), has magnified the fluidity and variability of human subjectivity (Dubar 2000).

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These identities, currently guided by rational patterns established by markets, are based on the purchase of products and technologies as a strategy to construct impressions of self-control and self-governance (Rose 1999, 85–86). On the other hand, this generalized use of goods has also shown a progressive appearance of fears and uncertainties related to intimacy, desire, and human relationships (Bauman 2003) and the emergence of plural forms to understand, interpret, and narrate the usefulness of purchasing these technologies.

The global flow of images and markets closely connected to corporal appearance has given rise to new images, symbols, and metaphors about the body and its transformative ability to achieve desires of "normativity" (Esteban 2013; Le Breton 2002). In this regard, the progressive accessibility and popularization of technologies available in world markets to modify the corporal appearance have redefined the body as a "market commodity" to accomplish illusions of freedom and redefine identities and also to improve social and economic positions and enable subsistence in competitive working realities (Blum 2003; Edmonds 2007). I use the term "life-enabling" practices to describe how these conglomerations of medical technologies (i.e. steroids, hormones, neurochemicals, and silicone) are used beyond therapeutic interventions to govern the body according to individualistic needs and desires and allow people to enhance life (Hogle 2005, 696–697).

Although examples of transgressions of the male/female gender dichotomy have existed in Indonesia for several centuries (Boellstorff 2005; Peletz 2006, 2011), the term *waria* is the current neologism used to describe the male-to-female transvestite[1] community in the country.[2] *Waria* are males who do not conform to social stereotypes of masculinity and use women clothing (Oetomo 2002). Over decades, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and grassroots organizations (GROs) have been absorbed in the promotion of civil activism and "death-preventing" practices such as HIV prevention and treatment programs among *waria* in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. However, *waria*'s struggle for well-being is also embedded in negotiating access to certain "life-enabling" practices. This chapter proposes an exploration of how *waria* use "life-enabling" practices to subsist in a changing and competitive sex work environment and how these technologies have transformed *waria*'s subjectivity. To this end, this piece of research resolves around the use of the so-called "New ethnography of development" (Mosse 2005) to present an alternative exploration of these medical practices and discourses. I will focus on everyday practices,

social dynamics, and debates between *waria*, society, and NGOs, leaving behind monolithic and deterministic notions of dominance, resistance, and hegemonic relations. Accordingly, I will divide the chapter in two sections. First, I explain the current neoliberal changes in Indonesia and the dynamics of socialization, relationships, and subsistence among *waria*. I will highlight how prevalent social, religious, and economic discrimination against *waria* strengthen their vulnerability in establishing a dignified livelihood. Secondly, I will describe the impact of practices of body modification on *waria* subjectivity, discuss the different strategies *waria* develop in the broader context of late capitalism to obtain silicone and female hormones,[3] and expose different interpretations around the usefulness of consuming "life-enabling" practices.

The data used to elaborate this chapter come from a study I conducted between February and May of 2014 in the city of Yogyakarta, Indonesia. I performed several non-recorded encounters and 35 semi-structured interviews with *waria*, non-regulated silicone practitioners, staff from NGOs and GROs, community health workers, and *ustadzs* (male teachers who spread Islamic faith). I conducted observations in areas that are popular among *waria* who sell sex, neighborhoods where *waria* reside, public and religious meetings, and two hospitals where there were *waria* hospitalized. Finally, I moderated two focus group discussions with ten and seven participants, respectively.[4]

Waria Livelihoods: Strategies of Subsistence in the Post-Suharto Era

Waria have existed in the city of Yogyakarta for centuries, but the first testimonies I collected concerning their presence are from the 1970s. In that epoch, *waria* were divided in two different groups: one composed by *waria* who were born in Yogyakarta and another made up of migrant *waria* from other regions.[5] In 1982, a *waria* organization called *Ikatan Waria Yogyakarta* (IWAYO)[6,7] emerged. This organization was created to increase the acceptance of *waria* in Indonesian society and promote their economic inclusion. To this end, IWAYO focused on three main areas: sport, art, and economy. The group regularly organized different recreational activities outside the political arena such as volleyball and football competitions, dance and song performances, and workshops to teach hairdressing, sewing, or typing. IWAYO eventually disbanded in 1990 because of internal conflicts.[8] After IWAYO's fall, seven small *waria*

groups (named *Kota Kedir*, *BI*, *Badran*, *Sidomoyo*, *Bandol*, *Jalan Solo*, and a group of Beauty salon *waria* without a name) emerged. These groups were situated in different neighborhoods and working areas of the city where *waria* were accepted.[9] They did not have a formal structure and did not organize activities. These patterns of gathering have started to change since 2006 when new *waria* groups (named *Waria Kolonprogo*, *Prambanan*, *Sorogenen*, *Ebanizer*, *Gaharu*, and *Lotus*) appeared.[10] Simultaneously, old and new *waria* groups began to develop an organizational structure, organizing regular meetings and civil acts to claim political representation, social visibility, and respect. To understand these changes, it is necessary to briefly outline the socio-political and economical changes in Indonesia since the fall of Suharto's regime in 1998. During the *New Order* era (1965–1998), the activity of all social organizations was controlled and regulated by the state, which prohibited demonstrations or political claims (Hadiwinata 2003). After Suharto's fall, Indonesia started the *Reformasi* period, which encompassed relevant political and economic changes: Indonesia was declared a democratic republic, political and religious prisoners were released, the state power was decentralized, and the country was opened to foreign markets and investments (Beittinger-Lee 2010; Brenner 2011; Brünte and Ufen 2009; Nyman 2007; Picard and Madinier 2011). Multilateral agencies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund took advantage of the latter measure using state organizations and NGOs to foster the spread of neoliberal market logic through conditional development loans. In concrete, the efforts of these institutions have focused on the promotion of individual freedom, free markets, and the creation of political community-based organizations[11] to stimulate civil society[12] (World Bank 2001, 2014) with the aim to create self-enterprising subjects to expand the information industry (Ong 2007, 5) and support markets (Mosse 2006).

Within this context of changes, *Perkumpulan Keluarga Berencana Indonesia* (PKBI) reformed its strategies in 2006 from assisting *waria* (it had been working with *waria* in health issues since the 1980s) to organizing them politically:

> PKBI changed the strategy, PKBI no longer assisted them [*waria*] as a community, but PKBI started to organize them as a community […] and also we made the campaign "give me your right". *Waria* are losing so many rights as citizens. So, we normally say "we are *waria*, we are Indonesian, we deserve the same right", because they are losing so many rights. We are

> trying to make marginalized people walk together and criticize the policy that the government makes. (Interview with Anka, member of PKBI, March 11, 2014)

Waria have historically been a marginalized minority group in Indonesia because of their gender (KIWA and Toomitsu 2011; Koeswinarno 2007; Kortschak 2010). For this reason, PKBI trained *waria* on human rights and instructed them on how to transform their working and residential groups into legal organizations with the intention (in words of PKBI's staff) to empower *waria*, increase their self-confidence and independence, and help them to become politically active Indonesian citizens.

In the words of *waria* participants, engaging in this program has lead them to develop a political and social awareness, which has been translated into civil activism in order to vindicate personal liberty and rights. Nevertheless, social and institutional discrimination against *waria* prevails. During the *New Order*, the regime conducted a strong attempt to regulate sexuality and its expressions (Suryakusuma 1996). As Boellstorff (2004) addresses, before the 1980s, *waria* who publicly wore female dresses were toughly discriminated against. It was from that decade when *waria* began wearing women's clothing in their daily life (2004, 164–165) Until today, the presence of *waria* in the public space has created tensions with authorities as the government maintains its attempt to criminalize non-heteronormative sexual practices (Blackwood 2007; Oetomo 2000, 50; Safitri 2013). Additionally, the appearance of small groups of hard-line Muslims in the post-Suharto era (such as the *Front Pembela Islam*[13]) has increased discrimination and violence against *waria* (Boellstorff 2014, 151; Liang 2010; Zenn 2012; Rae and Graham 2014, 41).

This predominant structural discrimination is reflected in the current strategies *waria* have developed to subsist. Historically, *waria* have been only accepted and respected in certain labor niches: sex work, *ludruk* performances (traditional dances), street art, and beauty styling (Balgos et al. 2012; Koeswinarno 2007; Taha 2012). As a result of the end of the dictatorship, some *waria* have managed to study at universities and work in NGOs and social organizations, hospitals, theaters, *warungs* (small restaurants), high schools, or the fashion industry, a social sphere where discrimination appears to be lower (Kortschak 2010). However, *waria* still complain about their difficulties of getting a formal job: "In job's announcements, they only mention male and female needed. *Waria* who can do the job better than a man or a female would not be accepted. The

entrepreneurs do not look the work performed; they look to the sexual first" (*Waria* named Sari. Focus group discussion, April 25, 2014). Today, the majority of *waria* in Yogyakarta belong to the lowest social strata and live in a vulnerable situation. According to PKBI, 60 percent of *waria* in the city work as sex workers, street artists, and other temporary, informal, and precarious jobs without fixed incomes. Besides, many *waria* also affirm that they have to combine day jobs (as models, waiters, or stylists) and night occupations (mainly sex work) to subsist (Hardon and Ilmi 2014). The story of a *waria* called Abu exemplifies the vast difficulties that *waria* have to manage to survive. Abu is a *waria* in hir[14] fifties; (s)he left hir family household when (s)he was 16 years old after hir parents gave hir an ultimatum when they discovered that (s)he was hanging out with *waria* and secretly dressing in female attire. Abu left hir family home and started to face a tough reality: "I never imagined when I had to live alone how to support myself in economical things. When I had to face this problem, I learned what I had to do from other *waria* friends[15]" (interview with Abu, April 4, 2014). At first, Abu lived with a *waria* friend until (s)he could earn enough money to rent her own room, but as (s)he had difficulties to find a job being a *waria*, (s)he ended up selling sex.[16] Abu worked as a sex worker for about 16 years. During that time, (s)he developed life plans and desires, realizing that (s)he could not be a sex worker all hir life. Abu took different esthetician courses and, at the age of 32, (s)he began to work in beauty salons. This change led to complications. Abu was forced to change city and salon countless times, as (s)he did not have an identity card:[17]

> The problem was when I rented a room. After some time, people who did not like *waria* complained to the leaders in the neighborhood. The leader came to me and asked about my ID card, but I did not have it, so I had to leave that place. I cannot count how many times I had to move… for about twenty years (Interview with Abu, April 4, 2014).

In 2014, Abu was working in a beauty salon in Jakarta; however, (s)he decided to move to Yogyakarta at the beginning of the year when another *waria* friend told hir (s)he could get a free ID card in the city. Since then, Abu has been working as a street artist and living in a neighborhood in which a *waria* group resides. (S)he is sharing a *kost*[18] with another migrant *waria* (who came to Yogyakarta seeking medical treatment) and, temporally, a young *waria* who had been rejected from hir family

household. Currently, Abu works every day from 9 am to 5 pm, earning about IDR 200,000 per month.[19] However, Abu claims that this job is temporal. (S)he believes that in two to three years, (s)he may open hir own beauty salon.

In this section, I have presented a broad overview of the current socio-economic and organizational context of *waria* in Yogyakarta as well as the different problems *waria* have to overcome to subsist, highlighting issues that go beyond the mainstream "stereotypes" of sex workers as subjects forced to sell sex with no personal interests or future intentions (Agustin 2007; Kulick 1998). Moreover, this section helps us to introduce some changes introduced recently in Indonesia. While they have focused on the individual and market level, these changes have not led to an improvement in *waria*'s social context and living conditions. The following section has the objective to complement these accounts, describing the change in *waria*'s identities, translated in a progressive modification of the body to subsist in late capitalism.

"But We Don't Have Money, Do You Want to Pay for us?" Strategies and Interpretations of Silicone Injections and Hormone Intake Among *Waria*

It was the morning of March 22, and I was attending the funeral of a *waria*. After leaving the house of the deceased *waria*, I arrived at the cemetery where around 50 *waria* and non-*waria* people were already gathered. Upon my arrival, one situation attracted my attention. While the majority of *waria* were around the grave, dressed in mourning (generally dark tones) or informally, about ten *waria* in their 20s were dressed flamboyantly, with exuberant makeup, tight pants, bright dresses, showy bags, and high heels. These *waria* were not around the grave but moving constantly on the edges of the small cemetery, from corner to corner, while talking, laughing, and taking photographs of themselves with mobile phones. *Waria* around me started to utter comments and whispers about the ostentatious appearance of the young *waria*. This scene describes the emerging changes in *waria*'s attitudes and identities. Social prestige and economic position have been traditional fields of competition and envy among *waria* (Koeswinarno 2007; Taha 2012). Different constructions and interpretations of beauty as a strategy to reinforce dominance and produce social categories have existed in Indonesia for

centuries (Prasetvaningsih 2007; Saraswati 2013), and senior *waria* assert that beauty was also relevant in the past, though it was conceived as an unalterable "natural gift". However, with the emergence of the mentioned neoliberal ideologies in Indonesia, beauty has transformed as a category associated with individual status, symbolizing prosperity, modernity, and distinction but rivalry, jealousy, and greed as well. The opening of the post-Suharto era made possible the visibility and marketing of various forms of sexualities, gender expressions, and sexual desires (Altman 2001; Heryanto 2008; Lewellen 2002; Rae and Graham 2014; Robinson 2008). These current socio-cultural dynamics materialize in the celebration of *waria's* beauty pageants that have become popular in Indonesia (Altman 2001, 88; Boellstorff 2004), the opening of cabaret places where drag queens perform, the appearance of *waria* who are idolized by thousands of people on social networks for being fashion icons and an increasing interest of *waria* in transforming their appearances. Today, generally young *waria* spend considerable time and money watching makeup tutorials on YouTube, sharing *selfies* on Instagram, trying new cosmetics, buying fashionable clothes through Facebook, or seeking "miracle pills" to lose weight on the Internet. In this section, I examine the popularization of the use of silicone injections and female hormones among *waria* as technologies of self-governance and their social, identity, and religious implications.

Practices of body modification have existed in Indonesia for centuries (Boellstorff 2004; Ilmi and David 2014; Schliesigner 2015). From conversations with *waria*, I discerned that until the 1970s, they only used "traditional remedies" to feminize their bodies, such as inserting objects under their blouses to "create" breasts, drinking special beverages such as *jamu* to make the body more feminine or eating special fruits, and using scrubs to reduce their muscles. In contrast, the opening of the country to global markets and the publicity that exalts body cult has led to the current availability of new medical technologies, pharmaceutical and cosmetic products, and the popularization of body modifications in all of Indonesia, especially among youths and *waria* (Hardon et al. 2013; Hardon and Ilmi 2014). Largely, *waria* in Yogyakarta have been consuming silicone regularly since the 1990s. In contrast to other countries such as Brazil (Edmonds 2007), there is no injection facility in public hospitals, and body modifications are often socially and politically criminalized (Rodrigues and Smaill 2009, 203). To overcome these hurdles, *waria* in Yogyakarta have developed three main strategies to inject silicone in their bodies. First, they

travel to other neighboring countries such as Malaysia or Singapore where *waria* claim body modification practices have a better quality and are more affordable than in Indonesia. Second, they go to private beauty clinics in Indonesia whose services are overpriced for most *waria* (silicone injections into breasts costs around eight million IDR[20]). Third, they seek cheaper non-regulated alternatives, which include injections carried out by non-legal practitioners ("traditional healers" and *waria*, mainly). Concerning this option, some practitioners argue they have foreign certifications that enable them to inject silicone; nevertheless, *waria* claim these practitioners learned how to inject silicone and the appropriate quantities through experience acquired after years of injecting people. Although these services are also used by the general population (Sasidaran et al. 2012), they are too expensive for most *waria* (a silicone injection into the nose costs around IDR 500,000 and into breasts two million IDR[21]). For this reason, the majority of *waria* in Yogyakarta tend to procure the silicone on the black market or from non-legal silicone practitioners and then inject with the help of friends: "Yes, I want to make it bigger, but I do not have money. In Hassul it is expensive. If we do with our friend, it is cheap. We buy the silicone in Umam and then inject it with our friend's help" (interview with Anita, April 21, 2014). Although this practice is cheaper, it can include significant complications and dangers. The lack of training and experience of *waria* friends who inject (they appeal to the trial and error method to counteract their lack of experience) normally entails unwanted results (extremely pointy noses, exorbitant cheeks, swollen lips and unbalanced breasts) and even death: "[*(s)he injected*] silicone in hir breasts at noon and then at six pm. (s)he started to feel pain in the chest, hir heart was beating so fast… and then, after 2 hours, (s)he died" (interview with Anita, April 21, 2014).[22] Deaths are the most dramatic consequences; nevertheless, this practice also involves other health complications. Normally, the silicone used is cheap (hence, the quality tends to be poor) and the needles employed are not always sterilized (or even the same needle is used to inject silicone in different parts of the body); therefore, *waria* often complain about infections and allergies resulting from the use of silicone: "I have a friend not far from here. (S)he used silicone, and since then hir nose is always red. (S)he is always scratching it during the night, every night. (S)he has to use CTM[23] or anti allergic to sleep" (Interview with Maka, March 10, 2014). *Jamkesmas* insurance (the Indonesian national health insurance for people with low income) does not cover these complications, and there is fear among *waria* to go to doctors when these

problems appear. *Waria* discern that this practice is illegal; thus, they think doctors could judge, get angry or denounce them. From my research I found that *waria* who experience problems with silicone often solve these complications buying medicines recommended by their peers in supermarkets or *Apoteks* (pharmacies).

Like silicone, hormone intake is a recurrent practice among *waria*.[24] The *Jamkesmas* also does not cover hormone therapy; thus, *waria* have to resort to non-legal markets to obtain hormones. As with silicone, there are expensive beauty clinics that *waria* cannot afford[25] and cheaper non-regulated alternatives like hormone dealers and nurses from maternity wards (Hardon and Ilmi 2014). There are different hormone dealers, mainly based in Jakarta, who provide hormones purchased abroad. Moreover, some *waria* who work in neighboring countries such as Singapore also bring hormones for their *waria* friends in Yogyakarta. These *waria* claim it is cheaper and easier to buy hormones in these countries as they have been available in shops or *Apoteks* without prescription since the late 1990s (Winter and Doussantousse 2009). The price per box is between IDR 400,000 and IDR 900,000,[26] which is expensive to many *waria*. The second alternative consists of visiting certain nurses in health centers and hospitals who work on maternity wards for contraceptive injection of female hormones (normally *progestogen*[27]). The price per injection is around IDR 20,000[28], and some *waria* get them almost daily.

Generally, *waria* consume hormones without any kind of medical supervision.[29] The majority of *waria* in Yogyakarta cannot afford any supervised hormonal therapy because of their socio-economic position. Hormone sellers and *waria* discuss the appropriate quantity of pills and injections, although in most of the cases *waria* regulate their doses based on the different side effects they experience.[30] If they consider the side effects are negative, they reduce the dose or stop taking hormones until they feel better. Otherwise, they keep the same dose or even increase it to obtain faster results (Ilmi and David 2014; Humphries-Waa 2014). However, some years ago, some *waria* developed an alternative strategy to receive supervised hormonal therapy from medical practitioners for a low charge. Some *waria* close to PKBI established friendly relationships with the medical staff of a clinic PKBI has in the neighborhood of *Badram* and asked doctors for supervised therapies.[31] These therapies lasted five years, and they cost IDR 5000[32] per session (the money was to replenish the disposable medical supplies). When PKBI boards discovered these practices, they tried to persuade doctors not to give hormonal treatments to *waria* as they

argued that *waria* were not capable of complying with the therapy. Some doctors ignored this advice and kept on providing services to *waria*. These cases occurred some years ago, but today there are still some *waria* using this strategy secretly, although PKBI continues rejecting it.

"Life-enabling" practices are intimately connected to images of individuality. *Waria* describe these practices as a personal election, not as a right. For this reason, they do not behold the necessity to claim to PKBI or the local government access to safe silicone injections and hormone treatments; for them these practices are an individual matter. Furthermore, the support of these practices does not represent a priority for PKBI. Essentially, the organization argues these practices are illegal and risky:

> [*Silicone injection*] is a part of an illegal act, it is a sort expression but, yeah, you guys have your body so first of all we say that this is your right but secondly we try to explain what the dangers of having silicone are. Because it is going to be inside of your body, so it cannot be taken … we explain that there is a danger of using silicone like it involves cancer. (Interview with Moh, member of PKBI, March 11, 2014)

The discourse of PKBI against the use of "life-enabling" methods is constructed through the possible health risks and lawsuits their use can imply. PKBI staff only interprets the concern of *waria* in body modifications as a sign of "Westernization". In contrast, for *waria*, "life-enabling" practices are not just used to meet social images of corporal appearance, beauty, and desirability. As explained in the first section, *waria* have been a minority group, historically repressed by the gender morality of the *New Order* era, which emphasized the abnormality of their condition and the necessity of framing them within the male psycho-social sphere. For this reason, "life-enabling" practices have become instruments to get over gender discrimination and enhance their subsistence within the society. "Life-enabling" practices help *waria* to feminize their bodies, hide their masculine attributes, and go unnoticed as "real women" (Safitri 2013). Hence, *waria* who want to start a career on television, fashion, or entertainment industry use "life-enabling" practices to exalt their femininity and have more chances to obtain jobs. On top of that, "life-enabling" practices have become indispensable in sex work. As a *waria* who worked as a sex worker in hir youth expressed to me, in the past, physical appearance was important, but clients used to prefer those *waria* who were friendly and talkative with them. However, current *waria* sex workers state that client's

preferences have changed as they desire *waria* with feminine appearance.[33] Hence, "life-enabling" practices have become resources to continue to get clients and subsist in a context of significant vulnerability.

> Nestor: as a *waria*, why is it necessary to use silicone and hormones?
> Indah: Sometimes because consumers demand it.
> Sari: It is normal, because males want big breasts
> Indah: Because some men only pay attention to the breasts, not the face
> Nadita: In my opinion, it is because of demand, but for me, I do not use it. We can do some tricks. We can use balloons (Focus Group Discussion, April 25, 2014).

Waria conventionally have defined themselves as female souls trapped in male bodies, a gift given by God (Boellstorff 2004). They seek to look, dress, and act in a feminine manner (using women's clothes and displaying feminine gestures). Some *waria* have desires to perform sex reassignment operations to become "real women"; nevertheless, the majority dismiss this practice as they consider male genitals are one of the attributes that define their subjectivity as *waria*. For this reason, Boellstorff asserts *waria* operate within the orbit of male gendering (Boellstorff 2004, 161). The popularization of "life-enabling" practices have generated different reflections and reformulations of this notion of "male orbit" among Muslim *waria*. Although *waria* have been historically discriminated in Islam (Koeswinarno N.d.), Muslim *waria* have attended mosques dressed as males and claiming to "be" men and "feel" as men in the eyes of God (Boellstorff 2004). Today, some Muslin *waria* who have modified their bodies find this assignment complicated. They often use corsets to hide their breasts but, sometimes, the excess of silicone in their bodies reveal their condition of *waria*:

> You can imagine. If Pursa wants to do the Friday's prayer in a communal way, with hir condition and hir face like that, what would people say about hir? Moreover, when I go to mosque, with my face and my body like this, what would people say? (Interview with Maka, April 6, 2014)

Simultaneously, some *waria* consider that "life-enabling" practices can represent a "conflict" with God's wishes as God could take their body modifications as falsehoods (in the end, *waria* agree they have a masculine body). The following ethnographic extract illustrates this concern.

Once I was spending the afternoon gathering with a group of *waria* in a *kost* when a new *waria* in hir forties entered the room. Unlike the rest of *waria* I had met before, (s)he had a short haircut, almost like a man's. This issue attracted my attention as *waria* were always bragging about the length and strength of their hair. When I asked hir why (s)he had such short hair, (s)he responded seriously: because I want to look like a male. I do also want to remove my breasts! Inquiring into the reasons behind hir statement, the subject of religious faith gained prominence:

> Néstor: Why do you want to remove your breasts?
> Sheren: I was young; I had a young soul, following my passion. I did not think about the effects in the future. Now, the plan… Everything needs a process, and we want to be better and better. Before, I was following my passion. Now, I am more grateful with what I have. Eventually we will die as well.
> Néstor: But, why to change? Because of religion?
> Sheren: I heard in many lessons, in religion it is said that it [*body modification*] is wrong. We will die eventually, thus, I want to be like when I was born. If you are female, you must be buried like female, the same for male.
> Néstor: To make peace with God?
> Sheren: Yes, one of the reasons is that. Release me from my burden. Thus, it would not be tough anymore. Become perfect as our first-born. I am afraid that I would not go to heaven (Interview with Sheren, April 7, 2014).

As Professor Oleh Koeswinarno[34] expressed to me in a personal communication, these changes among *waria* are not novel. Already in the past, some elder Muslim *waria* decided to "revert" to their male appearance and get back to their family households to make peace with their relatives when they perceived their death was close. The current complication rests in the fact that modern "life-enabling" practices are not as feasible to remove from the body as traditional practices. Senior *waria* often claim to have used "life-enabling" practices when they were young and sought to explore their sexuality and feelings. In contrast, when they get older, these *waria* become more interested in gaining prestige and respect toward other *waria* and their neighbors and exploring their religiosity (Taha 2012). The significant number of *waria* who explored the use of these practices in the 1990s and are currently experiencing these clashes is leading to two different reactions. Some of them try actively to advise young *waria* about the glitches "life-enabling" practices can entail in the future. In contrast, other *waria* are constructing a more flexible interpretation of

the gender dichotomies established by the Islamic faith, where spirituality is separated from the body experience. This has led to some *waria* claiming to "be" women in the eyes of God and act like females within the religious sphere (Safitri 2013; Taha 2012).

This section has described how the dissemination of individualism and free market logic in Indonesia have reconfigured *waria*'s notion of the body into a malleable instrument of consumption used to meet current identity constructions and beauty ideals and individualistic feelings. These technologies have a significant social component as they allow *waria* (mainly those who sell sex) to live and subsist in late capitalism, adapting their bodies to the mainstream constructions of sexual desirability in Indonesia and helping them to overcome vulnerability by increasing their chances for obtaining "feminine jobs" outside sex work. Consequently, this redefinition of the body also entails clashes with the corporal construction proposed by other systems of beliefs. On one hand, NGO discourses emphasize biomedical dangers associated with the precarious use of these practices; however, they do not delve into the structural background that these practices have for *waria* as life-enhancing strategies. On the other hand, mainstream interpretations of the Islamic faith conceive body modifications as possible "obstacles" to reach heaven as it is believed God could interpret these practices are a falsity of the human condition. This reinterpretation of the body has given rise to new ways to give meaning to the position of *waria* in Islam and the society.

Conclusion

The enlarged development of certain neoliberal practices and ideologies regarding individualism and the free market in Indonesia has led to significant changes in identities and attitudes among *waria*. These logics, which promote forms of selfhood based on the consumption of goods and the generation of an outer appearance that suggests welfare and prosperity, have turned the preoccupation for physical appearance into a concern. Throughout this chapter, we come to understand two main aspects of the impact of these logics in Indonesia and among *waria*: first, that these changes at both a macro and individual level have not reflected substantial changes in *waria*'s living conditions as they are still marginalized within the society and second, that *waria* are actively involved in the social construction of their bodies and use them as a fluid instrument for their own objectives. The opening of markets that made techniques such as silicone

injections and female hormones available has impacted *waria's* notion of the body and allowed them to sculpture bodies that are able to meet social and normative expectations of desire and beauty in late capitalism, from which they hope to enable themselves to a better life in a vulnerable context (obtaining sex work clients and getting other "female" jobs). These narratives reveal how the body is becoming a malleable instrument for the construction of identities and as means for economic ends, but it can also complicate the individual's transgression between different spheres of life, such as religious contexts.

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Notes

1. The term transgender would seem more precise to define *waria*; nevertheless, it has strong political implications in Indonesia. This term is used by NGOs to describe *waria* as "political actors" involved in civil society activism, but as I observed, most *waria* do not consider this term representative. In order to avoid the use of transgender as an ambiguous category (Valentine 2007), I consider that the term transvestite is more appropriate, as Boellstorff (2004) does.
2. Oetomo (2000, 57–58) and Boellstorff (2004, 162) describe that the term *waria* was coined in the late 1970s from the conjunction of the Indonesian words woman (*wanita*) and man (*pria*).
3. *Waria* also use daily other "life-enabling" practices such as "magic treatments" for weight loss, beauty creams, and glutathione injections for skin whitening (Ilmi and David 2014).
4. The real names that appear in this chapter have been replaced by pseudonymous to maintain their confidentiality and integrity.
5. In the past, *waria* moved to Jogjakarta due to family rejection and social discrimination. Today, migrant *waria* also go to Jogjakarta

seeking free medical treatments and ID cards since *waria* organizations in the city have a strong capacity of negotiation with local authorities and health centers.

6. During its history, the organization changed its name many times (IWAMA, IWAYO, PAWAMA, GADO-GADO WADAM); nevertheless, IWAYO is the name all *waria* use to identify this first organization.
7. Family *waria* Jogjakarta.
8. For further information about this period, see (Koeswinarno 2007).
9. There are different neighborhoods in Jogjakarta that have been accepting *waria* since decades. In the words of *waria*, the history of this acceptance remains unknown. People from those areas have acknowledged and respected *waria* easily. In contrast, there are neighborhoods in Jogjakarta where *waria* cannot live or even pass through because of their gender.
10. Today, the number of groups remains undetermined because of the incessant numbers of *waria* moving to Jogjakarta. In the 1980s, the number of *waria* was around 60; now the estimated number is around four or five times higher. According to statistics produced by the Indonesian NGO *Perkumpulan Keluarga Berencana Indonesia* (PKBI)—Indonesian Planning Association—there are around 100 *waria* in the city. These data contrast significantly with the estimates of other Indonesian organizations, such as the NGO *Komunitas AIDS Indonesia* (Indonesian AIDS community), which reports between 80 and 130, and the *waria*-run organization IWAYO, which accounts 300.
11. These programs have been used widely in development since 1950s. Nevertheless, they are often based on preconceptions and ethnocentric projections about notions of production, participation, or community (Mosse 2005; Pérez 2012 see Chap. 6).
12. The notion of civil society involves contextual interpretations (Ehremberg 2011). Although the concept has been broadly used, it has facilitated significant difficulties when implemented in cross-cultural contexts (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999; Mercer 2002). For further analyses of the development of the term in Indonesia, see Beittinger-Lee (2010), Budiman (1990) and Nyman (2007).
13. Islamic Defenders Front.
14. Following the statement made by Boellstorff (2004), I combine the masculine and feminine English pronouns (s)he to name *waria* as

they consider themselves neither as men nor as women. Simultaneously, I use the accusative pronoun "hir" to refer to the third person singular.

15. In my research, I found that these patterns of socialization are common among *waria*. *Waria* and their groups are central in guiding and supporting "novice *waria*".
16. *Waria* also emphasize that sex work has positive implications as it helps them to explore and enjoy their sexuality (Kulick 1998). In the words of *waria* who sell sex, sex work gives them the opportunity to find boyfriends and earn significant sums of money. Today, sex work prices oscillate between IDR 10,000 and IDR 50,000 (USD 0.69 and USD 3.47 according to the exchange rate in September 2015. From now on, all the USD exchanges described correspond to September 2015), and some *waria* can have up to ten clients per night.
17. *Waria* forced to leave their family households do not normally hold ID cards. To obtain a valid ID card, *waria* need a legal paper signed by their relatives who often refuse to sign the document because they feel ashamed of having a *waria* in their family (Boellstorff 2004). In 2007, some *waria* groups in Jogjakarta started to pressure the local government to demand the acquisition of ID cards.
18. *Kost* is the word for regular accommodation in Indonesia among the low strata. It is a room between two and four square meters. Normally, the *kosts* where *waria* live does not have excessive furniture, only a mattress, a television, and a small cabinet for clothes. The bathroom is shared between several *kosts*, and it is situated in an outdoor common area.
19. USD 13.87. In Jogjakarta, the average income per capita of the population in 2010 was IDR 249,629 per month (USD 17.32), about three million IDR (USD 208.16) per year (BPS 2010).
20. USD 555.09.
21. USD 34.69 and USD 138.77 respectively.
22. Although there is no data about how many *waria* have died from silicone injections, these cases are more common than they might appear. During my fieldwork, a *waria* was found dead in a hotel room. Apparently, another *waria* had tried to inject silicone into hir breasts, but (s)he had failed, injecting the silicone directly to hir friend´s heart. Afterward, I heard that the *waria* who injected the

silicone had also killed another three *waria* through the same practice (two in Jakarta and another in Surabaya).

23. CTM is a medication whose primary component is *Chlorphenamine maleate*, an antihistamine used to relieve allergy symptoms.
24. *Waria* use them to change their physical appearance to a more feminine shape. The most common body modifications are breast enhancements, diminishing of body hair, and skin softener (Gooren and Delemarre-van de Waal 2007).
25. *Waria* state hormone treatments in these clinics cost between one and two million IDR per month (USD 69.39 and USD 138.77 respectively).
26. USD 27.75 and USD 62.45 respectively.
27. They are one of the five major types of steroid hormones, used commonly for birth control.
28. USD 1.39.
29. Unmonitored consumption of hormones presents important health risks (Meriggiola and Berra 2013). It can produce significant health problems such as liver diseases, heart attacks, or chronic deep vein problems. Some *waria* combine hormone intake with smoking and alcohol drinking (Hardon and Ilmi 2014). These factors can negatively influence their health (Gooren and Delemarre-van de Waal 2007).
30. The most common side effects *waria* experience are weigh increase, stretch marks on the body, dry and frizzy hair, feeling of extreme cold, difficulties in having erections, dark circles and marks on the face, more sensitivity, partial deafness, sleepiness, unexpected mood changes, dizziness, and partial loss of consciousness (Gooren and Delemarre-van de Waal 2007).
31. PKBI promotes a hormonal program for women, but *waria* are not allowed to use this program.
32. USD 0.35.
33. In the words of *waria* sex workers, the profiles of clients have changed too. In the past, clients used to be men who could not afford the price of female sex workers. Today, the client's profile is more diverse, and it includes low social strata men (like in the past) as well as young middle class men or Western people (mainly in the island of Bali).
34. Prof. Koeswinarno is a current Research Professor at the Centre of Religious Life (*Puslitbang Kehidupan Keagamaan*) who has conducted extensive ethnographic research with *waria* in Jogjakarta from the 1990s until the beginning of the 2000s.

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PART III

Global Reproductive Commerce

CHAPTER 8

Gestational Labors: Care Politics and Surrogates' Struggle

Sophie Lewis

Introduction

A non-negligible fraction of human gestation has become professionalized. A sector of so-called "reproductive care" has fully emerged, whereby many wombs have entered the marketplace (Vora 2015; Pande 2015; Cooper and Waldby 2014; ICMR 2014). Far from stabilizing the meaning of "normal" reproduction, however, the exponential rise in surrogacy services is visibly troubling the systems determining what is called "motherhood". By extension, surrogacy publicity "causes trouble for the social relations of production and reproduction, which such mystification otherwise normalizes and conceals. Our task as thinkers of surrogacy, I propose, is not merely to explain but to "stay with [that] trouble" (Haraway 2011). As gestation has become paid labor, performed by a worker for a wage, space has appeared for scrutinizing these categories anew: a challenge that heaves up root ideological assumptions about motherhood and family. The surrogate becomes a potential subject of political rupture.

To point to how such a politics might be escalated, and what it might have the power to do, in what follows, I will question the technocratic distinction between surrogacy and pregnancy proper, which clearly

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naturalizes motherhood. The distinction, assumed to be self-evident, hinges on the downplaying of unromantic dimensions of pregnancy (such as pain and conflict) and, above all, on downplaying surrogates" creativity and political authority both as laborers and as prior mothers. I will also show how the majority of what passes for activist or political thinking on surrogacy ironically relies on truncated, technophobic apprehensions of capitalism, by which I mean an analysis which locates technology outside of the human body and outside of "nature", attributing to it the responsibility for (often gendered) forms of violence. Making mainstream sense of the practice of surrogacy also relies on a capitalist framework of reproductive normativity, which the surrogate—standing as she does both at the center of the conceptual cleavages mentioned above, and at the end point of a racialized, gendered, globalized process of neoliberal capital production—is a particularly well-suited figure to challenge.

For the purposes of this chapter, politics has been taken to mean the ensemble of practices which in some way aim at the composition of collectively livable life. When I speak of the potential for an affirmative surrogacy politics, I do not mean a juridical, legislative, bioethical or even analytic response to the facts of surrogacy. Rather, an affirmative surrogacy politics is the project of imagining a mode of collective, autonomous social regeneration, and appropriating, to that end, the technological means of doing "assisted gestation" (and—more broadly—care). Certainly, demands (e.g. for regulation) levied at the level of states, and transnational juridical bodies may become a first port of call for a struggle from below toward a way of enacting reproductive assistance that is both inherently just, and justly distributed. Here, however, an "affirmative surrogacy politics" points less at the pursuit of regulatory mechanisms and more at the self-organization of gestating together with others. I propose a normative pursuit of the conditions of possibility for ordinary people's collective and purposive reinvention of the mode of making children and, by extension, the world. These conditions of possibility are here suspected to include discursive interventions such as the recasting of surrogacy clinics as gestational workplaces (e.g. Lewis 2016).

Reintroducing Baby Gammy

The profile of marketized gestational surrogacy skyrocketed in 2014 when the case of "Baby Gammy" caught the attention of a global public. Today, Gammy is a child living in Thailand with Down Syndrome, while his twin,

a so-called "healthy" girl named Pipah, resides in Australia (Marks 2015). In late 2013, Pipah's now-parents, the Farnells (a heterosexual Australian couple), commercially commissioned the pregnancy that gave issue to the twins. In so doing, they joined the many Australian tourists who had sought the pool of affective, sexual, or otherwise-reproductive labors that had been cheaply available in Thailand until the military coup the following year abrogated their flow. The Farnells' decision to hire a Thai surrogate echoed another, also geographically uneven, dynamic. Some onlookers speculated about the parallel informal intimate economy suggested by the couple's mere appearance (he is white, and she a Chinese-Australian). Sure enough, *The Daily Mail* unearthed evidence that David Farnell used a "mail-order bride" website to arrange the marriage in Jinxing. The woman later proved to be infertile, hence the turn to a California-based agency, Thailand-Surrogacy.Net, for further—biological—reproductive assistance. That visible sign, captured by the paparazzi, of an already-racialized character to Mr. Farnell's appropriation of reproductive supports throughout his life could only heighten the drama of villainization that erupted when Baby Gammy was "abandoned" (Marks 2015) in Thailand.

The martyred saint or "Mother Courage" within the tale was the surrogate employee of Thailand-Surrogacy, a young woman named Pattharamon Chanbua (Michael 2015). The multiple embryo transfer she underwent had resulted, as is common in commercial surrogacy, in the implantation of twins, which incurs a premium fee. Reportedly, late in the contract pregnancy, the Farnells were apprised by the clinic of the male fetal twin's Trisomy 21 (Gammy also suffers a congenital heart condition), and sought a partial refund, requesting that that twin be aborted, but Chanbua refused this option. Though it is somewhat unclear what Thailand-Surrogacy's position with regard to the late-term abortion was (disability is not recognized in Thailand as a legitimate ground for the procedure); another Australian couple at the time—who were infertile and desperate—claim to have received an email from the clinic that essentially offered them the disabled fetus for a fee (Hawley 2014).

While this evidence of "baby-selling" fueled several Australian TV features, further details of the backstory included further factors with equal "shock value". Mr. Farnell turned out to have a substantial criminal record of pedophilic abuse of girls, for which he had served an extended sentence in prison. (It is worth noting that a family member, not governments, brought the latter angle to light.) Once the media had gained their sensational arch-villain, then, Farnell swiftly became the symbol of an

egregious departure from surrogacy ethics and violation of implicit unspoken norms governing the access to global care typically enjoyed by married, propertied, heterosexual white men. Accordingly, it became standard for journalists to cast the turncoat commissioning father of Baby Gammy as an archetypal danger to women and girls and perfect enemy of the institution of the family. In sections of civil society, too, as the various petitions to "Save Baby Pipah" (from him) made clear, Farnell became the very embodiment of the danger against which the normative value of family had to be defended.

Farnell's association with pedophilia detracted substantially from his embodiment of a particular approach toward begetting kin, whereby he had tacitly placed conditions on his future-oriented commitment to parent the products of a specific gestation (an attitude that is arguably *not* egregious, both within and without the overseas surrogacy industry). The brouhaha prompted myriad international calls for "regulation" of the surrogacy industry: the *Sydney Morning Herald* headline on August 10, 2014 "Thai surrogate Baby Gammy is a victim of an unregulated world" was typical of these. Rarely was it noticed that Baby Gammy was also the *beneficiary* of lack of regulation in the sense that, contracts having been easily voided, he could straightforwardly be integrated into the Chanbua family. Gammy was the catalyst for regulatory measures which, in turn, created unpleasant scenarios well into the following year.

Like many other babies, Gammy was brought forth amid a frantic and opaque touristic climate shaped by an ongoing military coup; in particular, a new regime directive on child trafficking that immediately required commissioning parents to obtain previously unnecessary release forms from their surrogates (Holmes 2015; Rawlinson 2014). In early 2015, it was widely reported that Baby Gammy had prompted the state of Thailand to ban commercial surrogacy altogether (Australian Associated Press, 20 February 2015).[1] However, a backlog of already initiated gestational labors in Thailand resulted in an unhappy legislative endgame for transnational for-profit Thai surrogacy. For example, in July 2015, another couple was embroiled in a high-profile conflict over a contract brokered by the New Life clinic in Bangkok: the surrogate, having physically relinquished the baby, demanded it back, claiming she did not know the intended parents were gay (Holmes 2015).

Chanbua, for her part, never pronounced on the main subject of concern for onlookers—the commissioning father's sexual predilection and criminal past. From her perspective, the relevant events of 2014, in

a nutshell, were that Gammy did not receive a lethal injection *in utero*, but was born alive, side by side with his sister. Subsequently, the Farnells changed their mind about not wanting Gammy; yet Chanbua refused their about-face and made a counter-threat of reclaiming Pipah. Gammy fell to the care of the poorer, geographically peripheral, racially other—yet by popular accounts fitter—putative parent. As such, the contradictions within the cry for regulation have been particularly glaring in this case. Although known as "Baby Gammy", the more substantial controversy surrounded the part of the surrogacy transaction that could be said to have gone smoothly, namely, Baby Pipah.

More regulation in surrogacy does not necessarily entail straightforward enforceability; in Israel and the UK, extra rules seek to allow limited forms of diversion from the initial agreement in a surrogacy (subject to change in parties' circumstances or, notably, the surrogate changing her mind). If a form of labor regulation were enforced removing all possible leeway around the devolution of custody following surrogacy, then, in this case, precisely the outcome that was popularly deemed unacceptable would have transpired: the ex-convict would have become enshrined as the parent of the male vulnerable twin also. However, the "unnatural" creation of kinin for-profit clinics is easier to mediatize than is the crisis of the "normal" and "natural" family. Far harder to mobilize around is the everyday violence that falls outside the purview of surrogacy: that between fathers and daughters or men and more vulnerable members of families.

Symptomatically, in the discourse around Gammy, the exact location of the perceived wrong was elusive, and non-specific to surrogacy. Implicitly it lay in the separation of the twins, the unsafety of Pipah in her Australian home and, simultaneously, in the relegation of the disabled male to the care of the person who insisted he be born; yet, also, in Farnell's presumption to procreate at all, that is, in the very origination of Pipah and Gammy, their very existence. Civil participants in the running commentary on Gammy—and the need for regulation he supposedly proved—rarely pronounced on how (for example) screening and barring a commissioning parent could be reconciled with the almost universally presumed "right to procreate". Absent from this discussion, then, was any widespread sense that bigger questions were appearing on the table—*is procreation an intrinsic good? to whom do babies belong? how should humans be reproduced? what counter-acts gendered forms of power?*—that were far more daunting than the simple moral framework of regulatory failure and egregious transgression implied. Such questions touch on the relations of

the family *in toto*, exceeding in scope the minor role of the new reproductive technologies therein.

Gross surrogacy mishaps are not uncommon. The prolonged moment of extreme interest in the Gammy story, then, must be imputed to a mediagenic confluence of elements, including tangled markers of race, gender, and neocoloniality, but notably the specter of crisis at the heart of the family—in the form of middle-class suburban pedophilia. For comparison, a contemporaneous surrogacy scandal of far greater magnitude, involving a non-white member of the international elite, maintained a consistently low profile in the western media—its themes, though similar, proving less easily legible. Twenty-four-year-old Japanese business magnate and aspiring politician Mitsutoki Shigeta simultaneously employed at least 11 Thai surrogates with different agencies and was said to be envisioning these children as a future political voting bloc for himself (Rawlinson 2014). Shigeta, a single man, clinically fathered at least 16 babies in 2014: prompting a raid by Interpol, yet eliciting only surprisingly restricted debate about limits to the "right to procreate". Reference to Shigeta serves in this context to contextualize Baby Gammy and indicate that his case was not the only available lightning rod for global concern around Thailand's surrogacy industry, but rather, one whose characteristics were perhaps more likely to circumscribe the political questions it was able to generate.

Responsibility and "The Family"

Since biogenetics distanced Chanbua, and her pre-existing family, from Gammy, the decision to care for Gammy was more visible *as a decision*. It generated belonging and "responsibility" in the sense vindicated by Donna Haraway of responsive attentiveness to a stranger, other or kin (Haraway 2011). Whether Gammy is "hers" or not was beside the point, in this view. As Haraway says on the theme of surrogacy, "The point for me … is *parenting*, not *reproducing*. Parenting is about caring for generations, one's own or not; reproducing is about making more of oneself to populate the future, quite a different matter" (2011). Given that birth has typically been the marker of individual humans' genealogies and positions within families and racial hierarchies, the rise to prominence of bodies-in-labor whose babies are *not* racially continuous with themselves—nor kin—introduces new subversive potential to the scene of global reproduction. "The Surrogate remains a creature that nourishes indigestion" (Haraway 2011).

Chanbua's partner was evidently happy to become a surrogate *father*, and he was not the only one in the extended Chanbua family to adopt this stance. Their embrace was not where Gammy had been intended to belong, despite his bodily continuity with Pattharamon's body. Thus Gammy's fame was that of a global pseudo-orphan, out of place. As the above photograph suggests, the perceived fragility of Baby Gammy—whose need for medical care inspired thousands of charitable donations—was derived in part from his relative whiteness, which emerged from the brown flesh of an Asian woman and, by achieving high global visibility, could not but elicit anxiety in its apparent threat to the social construction of race. Pregnancy's historically fraught yet unavoidable role in eugenic delineation and the policing of class property as well as race boundaries is well-documented in the canon of critical race theory, on which some of the most thoughtful contemporary theorists of reproductive technology fruitfully draw (Vora 2015; Rudrappa 2015; Banerjee 2014; Roberts 2009). The new race-critical and de-colonial geographies of gestation, by heightening many of the contradictions that ideologies of "family" seek to resolve through pregnancy, offer fresh opportunity for a struggle over care. The starting point, to adapt a famous slogan of post-colonial insurgency and self-affirmation, might be: "Your children are here because we are there".

While Chanbua's image was partially sanitized, her undertaking of responsibility for Farnell's biogenetic property, deemed the defective by-product of her body's work, was still a somewhat indigestible act. In performing it, Chanbua interpreted the gestational labor that she had performed as a ground for an affirmative politics she did not choose to couch in racial terms—though its freight was anti-racist. Foremost for her seem to have been qualitative questions to do with intimate care for disabled children, whereby the prerogative to mother him hinged on responsibility, more than race or genetics. Her narrative, in fact, introduced qualitative and tacitly political dimensions that complicated the dominant story of Gammy's abandonment by his genetic proprietor(s). The BBC reported: "in an interview … Pattharamon Chanbua, 21, appeared to backtrack, saying: "I did not allow Gammy to go back with them—that's the truth. It is because they would have taken Gammy back and put him in an institute'" (11 August 2014). She also told the *Sydney Morning Herald*: "I would like to tell Thai women—don't get into this business as a surrogate. Don't just think only for money—if something goes wrong no one will help us and the baby will be abandoned from society, then we have to take responsibility for that" (Murdoch 2014).

Tantrums were triggered: at the scandal's apex, the CEO of Thai Surrogacy, just one of many companies the Farnells could have used in or around Bangkok, alleged that his also-Chinese wife had yelled at Mrs. Farnell that "they must take responsibility for the baby" (Hawley 2014). Global opinion ruled, however uneasily, against Gammy's best interests lying in Australia. Despite being visibly overwhelmed and to some extent drowned out by the media's ventriloquism of her, Chanbua could—when pressed—articulate a logic, undergirding her sense of where, how, and with whom Gammy should live, which contained elements of a non-proprietary vision of parenting. Her stance evoked solidarity with the newborns against the individuals who had commissioned them into existence (by buying her embodied labor-power), a subversive twist on classical maternity. As such, she conveyed the germ of the possibility of determining carers and infants' interests in common, instead of by exclusive reference to ownership and entitlement. In this, the reproductive *surrogate* was also centering herself, the definitionally marginal or proxy figure, in the decision-making.

The figure of the renegade surrogate—who has ideas of her own about child-rearing, breaks the terms of her agreement with the commissioning parents, and can be imagined, at worst, absconding with the baby she carried for other people—has presented a frightening challenge for the commercial surrogacy industry ever since the disastrously public and litigious case of Baby M in New Jersey, which exclusively involved locals. In 1986, the surrogate Mary Beth Whitehead changed her mind and staked a claim as the *genetic* mother (this practice of using the surrogate's egg, called traditional surrogacy, was the norm for surrogacies at the time). Baby M divided both court and public opinion, even sparking a national anti-surrogacy movement (the National Coalition Against Surrogacy) which had international support (e.g. FINRRAGE, the Feminist International Network of Resistance to Reproductive and Genetic Engineering; National Coalition Against Surrogacy). Almost 30 years later, commercial surrogates are typically *not* members of the same community (or even nation) as clients. That parties occupy different class positions is tacitly written into the exchange of money for procreative labor-power.[2]

The stark socioeconomic gulf separating the Farnells and the Chanbuas ensured that the "Gammy" arrangement resonated in many people's minds in its immediate resemblance to sexual and domestic service labor markets in the Pacific that are predicated on extreme inequalities. Clinicians combined Mr. Farnell's sperm with anonymously donated oocytes, meaning that Pipah and Gammy did not bear any genetic material of the intended

mother, Wendy, any more than they did Chanbua's. Thus, in signing up to bring the twins into being, *both* women were undertaking care commitments grounded in labor (gestating and parenting) rather than biogenetics. The unknown third had performed the "clinical labor" of donating her gametes. This intimation of a form of double or triple surrogation of Asian women's reproductive labors—in Mr. Farnell's home and family life—rewards scrutiny. It epitomizes an economic trend that has been identified by Melinda Cooper and Catherine Waldby as the deepening partitioning and marketization of certain bodily labors typically performed for free in the private domain (Cooper and Waldby 2014).

Noting this still leaves open, however, the question of the political purport of this increase in commercially outsourced and waged social reproduction. It has been my contention that Chanbua provided germ of an answer, her words threatening more than just the conscience of would-be genetic parents everywhere who may—reasonably—experience anxiety as to whether the whiteness of European babies who emerge from waged wombs abroad is real (Gusmaroli 2015). Chanbua captured the dual character of care—as work and love—that was, for autonomist feminists, the source of its potential mass class power. According to the 1970s Italian exponents of the Wages For Housework (also termed Wages Against Housework) campaign, both the wage *and* the demand for a wage could serve to make women's so-called "labors of love" visible as work and form a common platform geared toward the collectivization of socially reproductive life. Adapting the Wages Against Housework perspective, then, to contemporary surrogacy context, one might say: contract pregnancy or home pregnancy, "[e]very miscarriage is a work accident" (Federici 1975).

The Stakes of Seeing Surrogacy as "Just" Gestation

Gestational labor cuts across boundaries defining work and non-work, or kinship and everyday living on the one hand and the professionalized biomedicine dealing in "life itself" on the other (more on the latter later). Gestation, reflecting this internal dichotomy, becomes an oddly queer process when scrutinized closely, being both conscious and unconscious, labor and life, care and growth, nature and creativity, technology and flesh, metabolism and art, and production and reproduction (Lewis 2015). An apt source of metaphors that sometimes obscure more than they reveal, gestation perversely straddles crucial conceptual cleavages: public/private;

intimate/economic; productive/reproductive; conscious/unconscious; imaginative/animal; creative/passive; intentional/unintentional; even, since the rise of In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) in the late 1960s, hybrid/organic and vital/artificial, human/nonhuman. Pregnancy is the site of enormous more-than-human power. As excitement about womb transplants and technoutopian fantasies about ectogenetic incubators make clear, it is also the object of inestimable societal anxiety.

Presently, surrogacy functions as a domain separate from free, so-called "normal" gestation and motherhood, rather than as an extension of gestation's internal organization that reflects back on that "natural" state of affairs. However, the very fact that it is the gestator, rather than the person who steps in to be the parent, that is indexed as "surrogate", is wholly contingent on narratives of biogenetic property in the family, narratives that can be changed (Strathern 1992; Roberts 2009). Kalindi Vora is one of the few scholars who make the conceptual leap of looking at mothering through the lens of surrogacy, rather than vice versa. For Vora, the productive character of the work of mothering ought to become "more visible when viewed through … commercial surrogacy" (Vora 2009, 266). Certainly, the surrogacy/motherhood distinction is a powerful social construction, but cases like Gammy's show that it is only *contingently* based on the factuality of a biomedical expert's guarantee that one is making more of oneself (as verifiable by DNA testing). When needed, exceptions can be made in what makes something surrogate. The natural motherhood of a "gestational carrier" can be reinserted if, for example, the baby is unwanted: this cunning tactic of neoliberal society was the basis of Chanbua's public anti-patriarchal complaint "no one will help us".

Fundamentally, a surrogate, much like a wet nurse or nanny, is contractually obliged to care for a child, yet prohibited from harboring any excess desire to care for it independently. Departure from that Janus-faced script has the potential to elicit censure and backlash; as can, paradoxically, adherence to it—where seamless service is interpreted as callous baby-selling. Chanbua's public relations success presents suggestive indications about our society's anxious arbitrage between surrogates who deserve pity or "rescue". Gammy's fate, in the public eye, fell between a victimized brown woman and the predatory white pedophile who had not only "bought" Gammy, but also cast him aside. A vociferous assertion of the innocent surrogate's status as mother arose within a briefly viral campaign which invoked ostensibly contradictory tropes of saintly or heroic exceptionality, on the one hand, and a so-called natural mothering "instinct" on

the other. As this strangely bivalent response suggested, the job Chanbua performed was in one sense uniquely remarkable (as described above) and, in another, banally universal. Her motherhood was supposed to end with parturition, and instead, it began at that point, anew. As such, Gammy starkly embodied the disquieting possibility that newborns are *all* aliens—alienated products of gestational labor—who require conscious adoption, reappropriation, and care upon their exit from their unity with the mother's flesh (Lewis 2015). In the neglected thought of philosopher and midwife Mary O'Brien, *all* pregnancies contain this mix of singularity and generality, contingency, and historicity, through which gestators intrinsically exceed the bounds of "male-stream thought" (O'Brien 1981, 30).

The terminology of the surrogacy industry is a suggestive field for political appropriations and *détournement* by surrogate workers. For example—as noted above—the term distinguishing itself against the 1980s praxis of traditional surrogacy is "gestational" surrogacy. With the latter method, the surrogate's ova are not employed, such that the renegade surrogate can more easily recede in clients' imaginations, not least because the racial frontiers and geographic distances between commissioning parents and the surrogate's body have thereby been enhanced and securitized. Those whose bodies and whose labor have fulfilled a given procreative purpose, however, can easily inconvenience this implicit logic with reference to both experience and science that defies such borders. "It's my blood even if their genes" said one surrogate interviewed (Pande 2015, 148). Indeed, cells pass in both directions between any given mother and her fetus; articles raising awareness of this phenomenon (called "micro-chimerism") are increasingly prevalent (e.g. "A Pregnancy Souvenir: Cells That Are Not Your Own', *New York Times*, 10 September 2015).

Geopolitical anomalies such as Gammy bring to light this radically unromantic, unpretty, and unruly side to gestation. They point to the delusory nature of biogenetic securitization and to the potential limits of a global public's acceptance of the discursive subordination of gestational laborers who are surrogated in the service of others. The ability of contemporary reproductive markets to endure multiple such challenges and exceptions may be weaker than it appears. The historical test of this would be the difference between intentional, conscious, and collective action by surrogates, and these isolated reactive moments. Through these briefly available windows, when surrogacy becomes a controversy, it also becomes easier to see attempts at circumscribing the care politics that could erupt from this field. To recall the delusional phrase used by an

English commissioning parent (quoted in *The Daily Mail* in 2012) of their Asian surrogate, the hope of those surrogating their reproduction is that: "she is just the vessel".[3]

Repro-normativity and Technocracy

Capitalist biomedical technocracy, particularly in its highly gendered manifestation as above, presents a formidable barrier to apprehending the possibility of self-directed, conscious, and collective gestation. The industry goes by the name "assisted reproductive technology" where, by being assimilated under the rubric of technology, the meaning of surrogacy can, theoretically, shed all traces of pain, mutual uncertainty, and messy relationality. It becomes a package of "reproductive care" delivering a clean technical solution to the pathology designated "infertility" (e.g. Wendy Farnell's).

But this "technology" framing arises most decisively within the most value-extractive, slum gestational economies, which is to say, in so-called medical tourism and not so prominently in the UK, Israel, or the USA. For example, India has long provided the global middle class with one type of "tech support", and today, it positions itself as the destination *par excellence* for medical troubleshooting as well, boasting prices that "democratize" access to procreative assistance (Fixmer-Oraiz 2013, 138). Indian surrogates themselves may conceptualize their activity as God-given and kinship-forming (see Vora 2015, 120–128); but their managing clinicians do not. Inside the USA, by contrast, commercial surrogacy freelancers have established a quite different discursive arena in which the spiritual predominates over the technical, whereby they, as "surro-mamas", can enjoy privileged status as powerful beings and honorary family members. To these surro-mamas" central and almost spiritual creativity, the medical technology appears as purely auxiliary (Berend 2012). This tells us that understandings of gestation are shaped, racialized, and malleable.

Another ideological barrier to surrogate politics is equally formidable. In 2001, Katherine Franke coined the term "repro-normativity" to describe the social forces that incentivize motherhood to the point of pathologizing women who live non-reproductive lives. Franke, making a plea for the cultural de-centering of reproduction for its own sake, wrote: "the fact that the future of the species depends upon ongoing reproduction does not relieve us from devoting critical attention to the manners in which this biological demand becomes culturally organized" (Franke 2001, 186).

Why have a baby? Why ensure a baby is "one's own"? It is remarkable that surrogacy's public life—*viz* Gammy—frequently closes down, rather than opens up, questions about the fundamental assumptions structuring family intimacy and culturally organizing the very appetite for babies. Yet it is my contention that, in the field of surrogacy scholarship, we have also proven for the most part reluctant to challenge the repro-normativity of the industry. This particular reluctance can be partly attributed to a progressive embrace of surrogacy's affordance of genetic family ties to some people—Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender (LGBT), infertile, of post-reproductive age, or otherwise reproductively non-normative—who had not been able to create them before. A critique of patrilineal attachment to guaranteed parentage seems to fall short in the face of a desire for "more of oneself" that is increasingly brought to the market by women and queers. Yet non-heterosexual clients still make up a minority of clientele in reproductive markets, and if there is one thing the blissful imagery on surrogacy websites unfailingly communicates, it is uncritical promotion of biogenetic reproduction for its own sake. The infertility specialists tap the deep roots of repro-normative psychology as they whisper "*Don't you want one?*" via a thousand websites. How can one argue with the birth of a baby?

What is a baby: a crutch, or a sort of project involving nurturing a helpless stranger? Fetuses are *always* genetically different from the bodies they inhabit; and for their part, grown bodies are not discriminatory about the embryos they will accept for uterine wall implantation. It follows from this little-explored reality that stressing the material continuity between surrogate and "straight" gestation makes a good de-mystifying strategy, a form of knowledge counter to the self-evident and naturalized certainties of contemporary repro-tech. Performing an only semi-conscious yet fully creative labor, the surrogate worker manages the remarkable alchemy of growing an "alien" fetus insider herself (Majumdar 2014). Yet surrogates are rarely asked whether they also experienced their prior ("natural") pregnancies as alien (Israeli practices are a notable exception cf. Teman 2009). In typical for-profit surrogacy clinics, rules exist stating that the gestation must not be her first (this "proves" prior fertility and supposedly decreases the risk of counter-contractual bonding). The surrogate occupies the only truly authoritative position from which to judge the distinctiveness of the experience of bodily unity that links her with an "alien" rather than with kin.

The cyborg spectacle of a helpless squalling creature that is destined to become (for example) a white Australian citizen, yet is emerging from a

dark-skinned body in Thailand, is surely one of the clearest lenses through which to view the technonatural character of the human. The obvious artifice of surrogacy, together with the occasional baby on a "white" trajectory who ends up staying with a brown family, shows the contingency of the human body's naturalization and socialization within various global matrices of power and entitlement, belonging and otherness, and humanity and surplus. In order to be optimistic about the transformations that are possible here, one need not collude with the types of romanticization of the surrogate—often as a remote handmaiden figure, sometimes as ultimate selfless mother—that is (usually) performed by grateful parents for whom a "surrogacy journey" has gone well. Reading the terrain of surrogacy in a de-naturalizing and politicizing mode connects us, potentially, with the world beyond capitalist reproduction that some surrogacies allow us to glimpse. By questioning how different the stakes of "normal" or "straight" reproduction actually are, one can aim to assemble theoretical tools for a far broader politicization of social reproduction.

An affirmative politics of surrogacy, simply by raising and making the embodied person of the surrogate *matter*, is necessarily disruptive of the baby-centric, technocratic, and repro-normative organization of most gestation today. Within present conditions of welfare retrenchment, austerity, and a resultant deepening of reproductive crisis, the unrecognized laborers who are engaged in commercial and lay pregnancies alike could experiment with a mothering strike, demanding "wages for pregnancy", "wages for mothering" together. Such a politics would have to soberly confront the material parameters of the reproductive workplace, which are potentially necropolitical. It would have to de-center the claims of both clinical bosses and genetic commissioners on the contents of the laborer's uterus. Being able to contemplate the possibility of withdrawing the life-giving labor involved is as important as breaching contract by *refusing* to terminate pregnancy, as Pattharamon Chanbua did, on an occasion where it is the continuance of gestation that is against the other stakeholders' wishes.

If every miscarriage is a workplace accident, every abortion is potentially a labor dispute. As we saw earlier, gestation and surrogacy are separated only by a name and a choreography, the external technological components of any surrogacy process being merely IVF and embryo transfer: procedures which, in reality, are less sophisticated than methods commonly used in livestock agriculture. (Indeed, for some anti-repro-tech activists, the development of techniques on nonhumans in livestock breeding scandalously revealed the dehumanizing eugenic agenda behind surrogacy.)

If mechanically inseminating a woman with gametes that were mixed in a Petri dish is technology, then so is cooked food (Haraway 1991). And so, by extension, are all of our bodies, which are best thought of not so much as discrete human selves but as cyborg hybrids, part machine and animal, that are hopelessly and liquidly inter-imbricated with our virtual and organic environments, helping sustain other "bodily natures" (Alaimo 2010). From this point of view, there is nothing normatively unpalatable in remarking that surrogates themselves co-constitute the embodied technology of baby-making. The technology is *us*.

Beyond Technophobic Anti-Surrogacy "Feminisms"

For certain activists in the field of surrogacy feminism, however, this technofeminist tendency has been anathema. Feminists of FINRRAGE founder Renate Klein"s persuasion have persistently deemed reproductive technologies to be tools necessarily wielded by the enemies of "women". FINRRAGE commonly disseminated phrases like "Test-Tube Women" in the 1980s, by way of preface to the implicitly shocking question "What Future for Motherhood?"—as in the 1984 book by Klein. To them, the intrinsically degrading properties of IVF, embryo transfer and surrogacy would inevitably lead to these technologies being purposed—if left unchallenged—toward the engineering of greater inequality and alienation for the global oppressed sex-class. The meaning of technology, to these figures, was in almost all cases an unconscionable, masculinist colonization of life. As such they pitted their ideal of a female sisterhood "freely" exercising its biological autonomy against the deeply undesirable historic rise (as they perceived it) of "The Mother Machine" or "Man-Made Woman" (to paraphrase other popular book titles by FINRRAGE affiliate Gena Corea, published 1985, 1987). In the eyes of the network, it was in the power of "reproductive and genetic engineering [to] dismember, fragment, and dissect women into their body parts"—"reducing them to matter" (Klein 1991:394).

Notwithstanding contemporaneous critiques of this understanding of matter—by Haraway, Sarah Franklin, and others—substantial surviving elements of this sensibility still circulate in the twenty-first century. In the sphere of juridical and bioethical philosophy, proponents broadly within this trend ponder largely unhelpful questions, for example, "Is Women's Labor a Commodity?" (Anderson 1990)—the answer proposed is that it *ought* not to be—or "Transnational gestational surrogacy: does

it *have to be* exploitative?" (Kirby 2014)—where exploitation is a moral concept rather than the name for any confrontation between capital and the wage—and so on. Ironically for a form of feminism, these positions are built firmly in a repro-normative framework, because they assume that gestating genetically unrelated embryos destined for *other* communities is something women would not, could not, consent to do.

Continuing the influential early vein of anti-surrogacy thought, the strategic deployment of words like "machine", "incubator", and "oven" remains a standard way of vilifying surrogacy practices and exposing its supposedly inherently dehumanizing ("anti-woman") logic. Calls to arms sometimes reprise the FINRRAGE perspective almost word for word: "It's dehumanizing to be "an oven" for someone else's baby" (*The Observer*, 9 May 2015); "a twisted version of slavery … . It devalues life" (*The Guardian*, 4 August 2015). The 2015 inaugural press statement from the Stop Surrogacy Now network, which bears many FINNRAGE signatories and seems poised to replace FINRRAGE and revive anti-surrogacy feminism, includes the quote "A woman is a human being, not a machine".

Intuitive as this analysis can seem, it belongs to a broad tendency to truncate anti-capitalist thinking by regarding some forms of labor exploitation as morally unique and deserving of elimination by any means (implicitly, from above). When operating as a form of feminism, this tendency often targets certain intimate corporeal forms of work, notably, sex-work and surrogacy, identifying them as commodification of the person, and calling for their abolition on that basis. Making an analogy between surrogacy and the sale of sex, both of whose anti-dignity implications are taken as read, forms the foundation of contemporary campaigner Kajsa Ekis Ekman's perspective—as laid out in her book *Being and Being Bought* (Ekman 2013). Ekman repeats the basis of Gena Corea's denunciations of "reproductive brothels" in the 1980s, which had already echoed in myriad other FINRRAGE-affiliated publications. What the gesture assumes is that metaphorically identifying commercial surrogacy with "reproductive prostitution" constitutes, not just an analytical, but a pre-evident *normative* contribution in itself.

In other words, what it means economically and, by extension, politically, to work as a reproductive prostitute (beyond the bare fact that it is, in their view, very bad), remains unspecified. The precise content of the difference between paid and unpaid forms of sexual and reproductive labor, for example, between "normal" and surrogated pregnancies, is left disappointingly uninterrogated in these analyses—as they are in the

similarly technophobic ecofeminism of Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva, which asserts that "reproductive technology alienates both men and women from their bodies" (Mies and Shiva 1993, 141). Valuable as much of these players' advocacy is on other fronts, their anti-commodification stance rises to the defense of an essential, organic, unalienated (propositionally female) human body which can never exist and, in any case, does not emerge from an inquiry into paid reproducers" experience of their workplace.

Technophobic anti-surrogacy feminisms typically announce their opposition to "objectification", animated by the specter of the use of poor and working class women as "parts" and "breeders". Unfortunately, however, this approach immediately falls into the reification of surrogates itself—this time in apolitical categories such as victimhood, martyrdom, or saint-hood. The short-circuit stems from a common political failure, namely the partial inability to distinguish one's rhetorical strategy from one's applied analysis. A surrogate-led mobilization would not seek to "save" surrogates from their livelihood and, by centering surrogates, would necessarily require acceptance of the "cyborg" conditions of embodiment in which we are always already embroiled—this being a pre-condition for transforming those conditions.

Strategically, anti-surrogacy activists isolate the—growing—marketized section of biological reproduction as their site of resistance and refusal. At this juncture, however, their distrust of technology leads them, even if unintentionally, to withhold a respectful, comradely, and solidarity-based politics from surrogacy workers. Contra to the politicization I wish to abet, their flattened constituency ("women") seems to underspecify who the subjects of this unlivable present are, who can fight to make it livable. On the terrain of surrogacy, the question should be: how will surrogates struggle? How will paid reproducers struggle in common with mothers, carers, and wives? But these are questions that are, for the most part, omitted.

Gestational contracts do involve a penetration that is capitalist: by relatively powerful individuals, both materially and abstractly, deep into the body of a less powerful person. Unlike the cleaning contractors who sweep repro-tech clinics, or the migrant care-workers who may serve later as au pairs to the babies who are born in them, surrogates (who come from broadly the same marginalized classes as these) perform a labor that is "fully internal" to the value chains of the biomedical industry of fertility medicine (Cooper and Waldby 2014, 9). Nevertheless, to rhetorically

identify a surrogate with an "oven" is too easy, in particular in the absence of any theorization of what she would *otherwise* be (indeed, simultaneously is) in other (e.g. unwaged) spheres of life. It is therefore to deploy technophobic scaremongering to shame those responsible for women "renting" their wombs—a group which includes the women themselves—thereby foreclosing politics that truly includes them. This subtly but perniciously patronizing epistemic orientation toward gestational labor sometimes rears its head more directly: for example, Ross-Sherriff considers it worthy of note that studies were conducted using "standardized psychological tests [and] found that … surrogate mothers in Great Britain and the United States were self-sufficient, nonconformist, and independent thinkers" (Ross-Sherriff 2012). Presumably, the intended audience expected something less from "reproductive prostitutes" and/or "ovens".

The global divisions of labor that structure commissioning parents' access to procreative assistance are unjust relations of bioavailability; by their very logic, they exploit and amplify a stratification. Yet, the division can only be thrown into question from a perspective that refrains from identifying the bodies of the bioavailable with the people in question and from determining those people's best interests for them. Surrogates, in their own estimation—or so several ethnographies have found—work hard, physically and affectively (Pande 2015; Rudrappa 2015; Vora 2015). It is not without irony, then, that those who contemplate saving surrogates from their livelihood deny its status as work. In doing so, they become complicit in enabling the neoliberal, anti-political, technical framing of surrogacy on which the discreet and individuated channels of so-called "donor" economies depend.

De-stratifying reproduction implies refusing the sanctity of genetic property, as genetic property is the basis upon which intended parents effectively own a part of the surrogate's body and have the right to determine its fate. But de-stratifying reproduction implies above all a process of dispute, emanating from workers themselves whereby, if the encroaching tide of commodification of reproduction is denounced, then it is denounced because it erases the self-autonomy of bodies to an unacceptable degree, not on the basis of an exceptionalist argument that abstracting reproduction from all other social relations of work.

It is undesirable here to over-privilege gestational agency, for instance by inverting the gestationally passive—exclusively genetic—account promoted by surrogacy clinicians for their customers' benefit. This would amount to participating in a reductive and, anyway, ultimately false

authorship dispute over an infant (gene vs. gestator), which is hardly conducive to an anti-proprietary and common reinvention of the "family". The point in referencing the more-than-human, cyborgian surrogate, rather, has been to evoke a vision of mothering in which reproduction is vibrantly creative and alive, yet unromantic, unpretty, and de-centered in relation to other acts of mothering. The point has been to try to evacuate the myth of normal or natural gestation from the conversation, along with the myth of a normal of natural human body that untouched by the scientific shibboleth we call "technology".

Some not insignificant differences exist between the components of the labor performed by many present-day surrogates and other "naturally" pregnant women around the world. While all pregnancies are subject to a matrix of technological and governmental involvement, surrogates forfeit a greater degree of control, comply with a more rigid dietary discipline, and typically take up full-time residence within the clinical complex. At the same time, it bears spelling out, in the context of surrogacy discourses in which it seems taboo to say so, that the core of what takes place in surrogacy is no more nor less than human gestation. No more nor less technological, it is substantially the same thing. The gestating body, as we have seen, is not overly fussy about an embryo's genetics because it is always already substantially "alien". The aim in stressing this is to think through the consequences of that insistence from both the surrogates and non-surrogates" standpoint (one person very often unites both perspectives), and then to explore how such consciousness can be generalized.

The distinctive feature of the surrogate-fetus nine-month presence in the worker's anatomy is not so much its genetic difference as the fact that its path toward viability is progressively captured as profitable work. Profit can be derived from the sale of individuals" gene actualization, but this depends heavily—at the level of symbolism—on a false guarantee that the buyer's baby will *not* emerge to greet them full of somebody else's blood and guts. Yet, surrogacy being simple pregnancy, the baby always does greet you that way. After all, the surrogate's placental surfaces are what *made* the infant. The surrogate *stands in*, both symbolically and materially, for an absent gestational capacity in other people. And the fiction of surrogacy is that this connection is just as temporary as the disconnection (sitting out) of the surrogate from her *own* family during the process. Surrogate-ness, then, is above all else a disavowed social relation, a surplus on which one can capitalize.

Conclusion: Is "Life Itself" Strategic?

Arguably the most common trope found in both promotional schmaltz and disciplinary apparatuses around surrogacy is *giving the gift of life*. "Life" in this context evades definition even as its creation is enshrined as humanity's ultimate, ineffable, supremely rewarding *raison d'être*; so the above discussion of repro-normativity also noted. The affordances of "the gift of life" have been amply explored, for instance by Pande with respect to "gifts for global sisters" (2015) and in the work of Heléna Ragoné (2003).

From here it is only a small step to the matter of Nikolas Rose's influential monograph on biopolitics *The Politics of Life Itself* (Rose 2007) which formed the starting point for Cooper and Waldby's Marxian analysis. In the pages of *Clinical Labor*, "life itself" is a material and mechanical substance undergirding the value-forms of the contemporary bioeconomy (Cooper and Waldby 2014). Theirs is a risky strategy because, within infertility medicine, and sometimes its attendant critical scholarship, its invocation serves only to mystify. When the commodity produced by surrogacy is referred to as this formidably de-politicizing substance "life itself"—and this may be spurred by a desire not to say babies—the effect can be to disempower its makers and to resegregate them away from the other labors that sustain life-in-general, such as everyday housework. Rudrappa (2015) conjures the advent of "markets in life itself" while Vora's analysis uncovers flows of "vital energy" (Vora 2015). While neither analysis comes close to abstracting reproduction from other social relations, reference to vitality seems preferable to "life itself" in that it seems loosely quantifiable and thus more open to the qualitative transformations that forge our life-in-particular.

The professionally pregnant are, today, far from being positioned as experts on life's production and distribution. In fact, where "life itself" is explicitly in play in the same context of the womb, politics risks disappearing into a vortex of the arcane. Nathan Stormer argues convincingly that the dominant, sublime aesthetic within visualizations of gestation, which feature individuated human embryos floating as though in space, is a zone in which we have been trained to "look in wonder" at a "normal miracle"—namely, the miracle of life itself (Stormer 2008:667). In the face of "life itself", none of us can be pragmatic, syndicalist gestators: rather, we are all more or less equally deprived of knowledge and wonderstruck, except perhaps for scientists. But this can change. As we have seen, it is

gestational laborers who produce the commonplace life and—contra- to repro-normative dogma—this need not inspire grandiose talk of miracle. Lives, rather than life itself, are what matter; lives are where suffering and struggle occur. Admittedly, there are scholars who declare themselves optimistic about a "politics of life itself".[4]

If "life itself" really possessed politically unifying power, then the poor, low-caste, and racialized communities where medical infertility is most prevalent, and the queer and trans communities where non-reproductivity is destiny, would be priorities within the cultural apparatus of assisted reproduction. Instead, historically, we find assaults on these communities extending even to sterilization drives, and we see that allocations of subsidies for overcoming infertility are racialized in favor of whiteness—particularly when mediated via the institution of marriage (Banerjee 2014; Roberts 2009). In contemporary society, "life itself" stubbornly persists in manifesting not as a leveling force but as a striated, highly hierarchized category, much akin to the falsely universal idea of the human. "Life itself" is most often invoked within individualistic discursive fields, for instance, when intended parents announce that they love or plan to love the child of their own "more than life itself".

Whether most people love life very much is an open question, given the broadly abject, alienated, and immiserated condition of much existence in the twenty-first century, in which having children so often seems like the only available solace. Despite the evident claims of LGBT people on the provision of state procreative infrastructure as a form of welfare, the really pressing project for progressive communities at this juncture is not the project of passing on life but that of determining to render life *in particular* worth living. This endeavor is a very different matter to the preservation of life for its own, or indeed any individual's, sake.

In her history of the body and primitive accumulation, Silvia Federici remarks that during the Renaissance "male doctors came to be seen as the true "givers of life" (as in the alchemical dreams of the Renaissance magicians)" (Federici 2004, 89). An aftertaste of this legacy from the early modern professionalization of reproduction is still with us today. It is visible within surrogacy in the guise of a gene-centric technocracy that pretends experts are responsible for the gestational labors performed by women. Today's doctors can "gift" the fruits of these labors away—for an enormous fee—to a privileged few whom science has alchemically certified to be the bona fide parents in each case. Reproductive of life-itself, quietist toward concerns about life-in-particular, the innocent, discreet,

quasi-humanitarian world of infertility medicine structurally obstructs political contestations based around what surrogate workers actually *do*. Its internal apparatus leverages transnational distance (Ikemoto 2015), and notions of biogenetic property, to segregate surrogate gestation from the concept of gestation simple.

A surrogates' movement would be in a powerful position to begin to insist on some degree of negotiation and co-operation with regard to the construction of parentage more widely. It seems an exercise in utopianism to suggest that humans should adopt "their own" children as a matter of course or, put differently, that children should have to be adopted shortly after birth by whatever members of a community are collectively agreed to be best suited to the role—a choice which may not be biologically obvious. (In many respects, and in ways that become clearer through social histories of birth, what happens routinely to newborns *is* a form of "adoption".) These are, however, serious questions that could be native to a fully fledged politics of surrogacy. Conceivably, surrogates could lobby brokering clinics to rule out the anonymity and distance of the "reproductive tourism" approach, thus gesturing at a model of more mutualist or common childcare. In short, a politics of surrogacy could take what surrogate workers do seriously. Furthermore, it should go without saying that the de-naturalization of reproductive geography's gross unevenness is a task for every engaged scholar and onlooker, not only those who actually do the "assisting". However, surrogates who show themselves ready to disrupt and interrupt the terms, not to say the term, of outsourced gestation, despite the means of getting safe abortions residing in the hands of private experts, urgently require our support and solidarity. We are in no danger of running out of onlookers who will vocally characterize surrogacy transactions as baby-milling, baby-googling, baby-selling, baby-brokering, baby-farming, or indeed any combination of "baby" with a verb from the sphere of exchange. Like contemporary talk of "rent-a-wombs" and outcries about "test-tube babies" in the 1980s, such characterizations overwhelmingly fail to spell out the meat of their denunciation, which is merely implied by the neologism. The advancing frontier of commodification elicits recoil; as though denying that the most precious things should be for sale changes the fact that—exploitatively, yet consensually—they are.

If politics from below is to occur in the field of kinship production and, specifically, the biomedical industry of surrogacy, it shall be the specific and situated forms life takes—in and outside the womb—that matter. The question of consciously transforming the global mode of social

reproduction, uninterrogated in surrogacy contracts, calls out to be animated and answered. What kind of lives should we collaboratively bring forth? How should we do so? Whose procreation needs and deserves assistance? How much emphasis should we place on having kids? Once we have evacuated the biomedical alchemists and their anti-political apparatus of sentimentality from the (expanded) gestational workplace, asking such questions about the individual and collective life-forms that we want to reproduce—and those we want to refuse to reproduce—actually becomes possible. It is incumbent on anyone commenting on this field to seek to determine how we could organize procreative assistance in such a way that de-privatizes procreation, centers the interests and the knowledge of gestational laborers, contests the uneven geographies of bioavailability, and undermines the global divisions of labor that stratify social reproduction.

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Notes

1. Anecdotal evidence pointed to a subsequent upsurge in reproductive tourism to Mexico (Parry 2015).
2. Available evidence suggests it is more common in *non*-commercial (or "altruistic") surrogacy for all parties to be members of the same local geographic, religious, racial, ethnic, or national grouping.
3. Octavia Orchard, a commissioning parent quoted in *The Daily Mail*, "Our rent-a-womb child from an Indian baby farm", 31 August 2012.
4. Notably, Rosi Braidotti, in "The Politics of "Life Itself" and New Ways of Dying" in *New Materialisms*, ed. Diana Coole and Samantha Frost. Duke University Press, 2010.

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CHAPTER 9

Surrogate Mothers and Gay Fathers: Navigating the Commercial Surrogacy Arrangement in India

Anindita Majumdar

Introduction

As images of newborns being rescued in emergency airlifts of the Israeli government began to surface in the news media in the aftermath of the horrific Nepal earthquake in 2015, we were left wondering about the birth of these children. As reports began to circulate, it emerged that the babies were born to Israeli gay couples who had commissioned surrogacies in Indian clinics (Evans 2015). Stories that Indian surrogates had given birth to these babies in Nepali hospitals during or before the earthquake and had now been summarily left to their own devices by the Israeli government that only rescued its own citizens and the babies born began to follow soon after (Stoffel 2015).

Due to a new directive from the Ministry of External Affairs, which entailed governmental decree instructing in vitro fertilization (IVF) clinics and visa officials to grant medical visas to only heterosexual and married

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(for two years) couples to commission a surrogacy arrangement, gay couples found themselves debarred from access to commercial surrogacy in India in 2013. While there were other options available in Thailand, Mexico and Brazil besides the USA and UK, many of the gay couples had already commissioned surrogacies when the above directive was issued (Baansal 2013). This meant that IVF clinics and surrogacy agents had to be "creative", and resorted to sending the pregnant surrogates of gay couples to Nepal to circumvent the law. Nepal had recently passed the law disallowing domestic surrogacy arrangements, but allowing those commissioned from abroad and involving a foreign woman as a surrogate. And this is how the media walked into the Nepal story.

Commercial gestational surrogacy involves the artificial fertilization of an embryo which is subsequently transferred to the womb of a gestate, who nurses the pregnancy for nine months eventually relinquishing the child, once born, to the couple/individual who commissioned the pregnancy. Commercial gestational surrogacy as it is practiced today is an IVF-induced arrangement. The availability and access to the arrangement is mediated through varied factors including economics, eligibility and information regarding the technology and its use.[1] The ability to pay for the arrangement is just one of the overriding factors—the ability to sustain a pregnancy is another. However, access to the technology for both the surrogate and the couple seeking her services gets enmeshed in the ways in which the medical community and the state identify those eligible and ineligible through laws and practices.

Surrogacy as a medical practice has been of interest to many scholars. Research has looked at the idea of ethics and the legality of the practice (Brinig 1995; Cannell 1990); the politics of reproduction vis-à-vis the surrogate (Pande 2011; Ragoné 1996; Teman 2003) and the ways in which technology has come to reconfigure ideas regarding intimate, familial relationships (Ragoné 1996; Strathern 1995a, b; Thompson 2005). Ethnographic research has been the most common mode of analysis (Ragoné 1996; Thompson 2005), but so have the analysis of legal cases (Bezanson 1988; Smith 1988). Even though analysis of secondary data such as newspapers and legal reports has informed some contemporary analysis of surrogacy in the West (Cannell 1990; Kessler 2009), this combination within a transnational setting has not yet clearly emerged. Recent research on surrogacy in India includes on surrogates' motivations (Pande 2009a, b; Saravanan 2010; Udgaonkar 2010; Vora 2009b), a critique of the law (Sama 2012) points toward the need to merge the multiple areas of concern within surrogacy.

In this paper, the commercial surrogacy arrangement is looked at from the vantage point of the positions that the gay couples and surrogate mothers occupy within the arrangement. I suggest that surrogate mothers and gay couples are both part of what Saskia Sassen (2002) calls "counter-geographies of globalization" that depend on shadow or quasi-legitimate economies drawing on women's labor. Though Sassen refers to such circuits as part of trafficking and illicit economies of sex trade and child labor, commercial surrogacy in the way in which it is practiced in India resembles many of the characteristics that embody counter-geographies of globalization. Emerging from declining economies, the withdrawal of the state from its welfare responsibilities—the increasing "feminization of survival"—comes to define the ways in which many of the developing countries now seek to survive economically. Women are the backbone of these economies, contributing to domestic and national incomes. For instance, the care economies that Parreñas (2009) studies contribute to the Filipino coffers through the remittance economy of Filipino women who work as nannies in the developed world. Alternatively, the egg economies of Eastern Europe where women donate their gametes to transnational processes of surrogacy and stem cell research (Cooper and Waldby 2014) help sustain families in a fast debilitating national setting.

In India, commercial gestational surrogacy has now become part of the public-state rhetoric through numerous draft legislations authored by the Indian Council of Medical Research—the recent one having being formulated in 2014 and awaiting a Parliament nod—nonetheless governed by the Officials' Secrets Act making its discussion in the public domain an act of violation and liable to prosecution. It is no secret that the Confederation of Indian Industries and McKinsey have made industrial projections regarding the commercial surrogacy industry pegging it at 445 billion dollars, signaling the state's interest in it. Fuelled by the increasing interest of overseas couples seeking to have children through surrogacy in India, its position is primary within what is being called the procreative-reproductive tourism industry.

What are the ways in which surrogates occupy these counter-geographies of globalization? And, for that matter, how do gay couples occupy them? As intimate economies come to occupy spaces of legitimacy and illegitimacy, gay couples often inadvertently participate in these cross-border circuits due to the lack of other viable, sustainable options. However, participation in these circuits does not mean complete surrender, but a channelizing of particular moments of articulating reproductive choices

that are important to both the gay couples and the surrogate mothers. Through two particular narratives that echo the deep vulnerability and agency that being part of these cross-border circuits involve, I choose to speak of Prema and Xavier in their negotiation of the commercial surrogacy arrangement.

I met Prema, the surrogate, after the embryo transfer (ET) at a fertility clinic in Delhi. She had just come back from the operation theater (which is where ETs were carried out) and was disturbed by her experience. I had brief, fleeting meetings with her after that and the clinic and surrogacy agents I was in touch with closed access to her after a while. She was a migrant to Delhi with no fixed address, making it difficult for me to track her down later.

Xavier was introduced to me through common networks of expatriates living in Delhi. He was based in Spain, but we skyped a number of times for interviews and conversations. He shared pictures of his twin daughters with me referring to the journey he went through to have them.

In the field work conducted between 2010 and 2013, I profiled two niche IVF clinics in the capital city of Delhi (with intermittent visits to the neighboring city of Jaipur and Ahmedabad) that provided surrogacy services to an Indian and overseas clientele. Emerging third-party administrators (also known as "agents") were also an important part of the ethnography. They helped couples liaison with clinics and surrogates, and are increasingly becoming a necessity to create linkages between disparate segments of the surrogacy arrangement (Deepa et al. 2013). Especially in case of foreign couples, surrogacy agents were indispensable, often taking over the logistics of arranging and managing a surrogacy in India (Ibid.). In total, I interviewed 65 individuals including heterosexual and gay couples and single men seeking surrogacy services, surrogates and their husbands, IVF specialists, embryologists, surrogacy agents and embassy officials. Foreign gay couples formed a majority of the couples I interacted with, for varied reasons including stigma and access. Gay couples, mostly men, found the experience of contracting a surrogacy arrangement liberating. They wanted to share the birth of their children in a context where they had been refused the right to procreate or adopt, and had been deemed infertile. The power of their narratives could be compared to that of surrogate mothers who saw surrogacy as an avenue to overcome their poverty. The latter too were willing to engage within acceptable parameters of anonymity. These two sets of participants—the gay couple and the Indian surrogate—became a part of this paper primarily because they overcame social stigma and approbation to claim their right to their bodies and choices.

Prema's Story: The Surrogate's Choice

As she was wheeled into the post-op recovery room at Clinic A, Prema looked both exhausted and in shock. She had just come back from an embryo transfer (ET), where one of the doctors specializing in surrogacy at the clinic had inserted an embryo through her vagina directly into her uterus. Prema felt violated, "There were gents in the room…I was planning to leave…I mean even my husband has never seen that place [vagina] and these are strange men."

But she was not allowed to leave—Prema had already committed herself to the surrogacy program at Building Futures.[2] She had not signed a contract yet, it seemed, but had undergone the first major medical procedure in the surrogacy arrangement. Prema had been convinced not to leave once before, very early on in the program. Paromita (one of the surrogacy agents who recruited surrogates for clinics and commissioning couples) had convinced her not to, asking her to honor her commitment, and with a noncommittal promise of more money.

> I had spoken to Madam [Paromita] in the month of April regarding the payment of INR 225, 000 (USD 4200) in the month of June. When I didn't get anything I got upset and angry and told her that I won't come for the ET. She explained: Prema you must not do that…and I kept saying that I have great respect back home…we are Pandits (Brahmin sub-caste)… we may be poor but we have respect…I am doing this under duress…I told her many times please raise the amount…give me some money my husband needs it for his medication and treatment…we have already spent INR 3000 (USD 50) on his medicines.

Prema had come to Delhi for the treatment of her husband's disability a few years back from a village near Gorakhpur in the state of Uttar Pradesh. After treating him at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in Delhi, it was diagnosed that his kneecaps needed a change for him to be able to walk. The surgery for kneecap replacement costs a lot of money, which Prema did not have. Worried about her husband's failing health, she had been struggling to make ends meet ever since. The financial worries were getting compounded daily with the fees for her two young sons' schooling, her husband's medication and the living expenses in Delhi. Their savings had been completely depleted and their wealth had been squandered leaving them to the mercy of distant kin and other well-wishers.

It was one of the neighborhood women who had introduced Prema to Paromita. Paromita spoke of how the village Prema came from had already

contributed one more surrogate to the agency's program. She soothed the visibly tense Prema by reminding her that her wealth would come back soon. The post-ET requirements mandated that Prema needed to relax. She was to stay away from water and food for two hours, before being discharged. But the discomfiture, more emotional than physical, that Prema felt after the ET, kept reminding her of why she was doing this. She constantly referred to her *majboori* (duress-desperation), that she was doing it for her husband. "What else is there for a woman…if my husband does not live then everything will be over. He may be lame and disabled, but in whatever condition he may be…I still love him a lot."

Prema's deep shame in doing surrogacy, which she regarded as sinful (*paap*), heightened her sense of duress (*majboori*). She positioned her choice as choiceless, and yet spoke of how she had had to fight with her father and husband to convince them that she wanted to do this. The shame meant that she could never mention this to her husband's kin. They would as she said, "*joote padenge*", beat her with shoes. Only her husband and her own close kin could know. Her sons would not be told either—if she did become pregnant they would be sent away before the pregnancy became visible. But once she got the money, the first major expense would be on her husband's treatment and then on her sons' education.

As Prema withdrew to take rest, she requested that I would petition Paromita to raise the compensation being provided to Prema. "Don't you think what I am getting is less? For this kind of work I should get more. Please tell Paromita".

***

The academic debate regarding the ethical dimensions of surrogacy highlights the importance of understanding the "choice" surrogates exert upon entering surrogacy agreements. Some see surrogacy as a form of coercion and exploitation of female bodies, while others depict surrogacy as a form of reproductive choice. I suggest in the following section that the boundaries are more blurry and that analysis of "choice" in the life of Indian surrogates should be more nuanced.

The analysis in most studies tends to place the surrogate's reproductive choice within extraordinary and ordinary circumstances that, however, depend to a large extent upon the ways in which the surrogate mother seems to be seeking social approbation. This social approval is placed in the complex network within which the surrogate's decision to be in the arrangement is taken. The "relational perspective" (Holman and Hagan 2001) finds the surrogate mother's motivations as resting upon support

from the intended parents, her husband, the doctors and the extended family. Of interest is how in most of these studies the surrogate mother is placed within an idiom of altruism in which they themselves position their choice away from financial motivations (Levine 2003; Ragoné 1996; Van Den Akker 2003). The overarching idiom of "giving" tends to place the surrogate in a "positive light" away from the underlying, yet dominant, rhetoric of abnormal motherhood (Parker 1983).

Many "constructivist models" have continued to influence analysis of surrogates as opposed to or in some way distinct to the normative social ideas of motherhood—both social and biological (Teman 2008). The biological essentialism that has marked the study of surrogate mothers as divergent and aberrant is also seen in another form of emerging scholarship that positions the intention of the surrogate mother as "choiceless". The "rhetoric of choice" (Williams 2010) seems to be the dominant motif in the portrayal of Indian surrogates by Western feminist academic Arlie Hochschild (2011a) and Indian feminist academics and activists (Qadeer 2009). Despite divergent readings, the overwhelming representation of the surrogate comes across as one that lacks agency and is without choice due to her marginal status. Surrogates seem to be alienated from their work and exhibit a form of false consciousness (Hochschild 2011a) that places them in a position of exploitation within the global reproductive tourism market.

The dependence and concern for family and kin drives economically disadvantaged Indian women to surrogacy, giving it the tint of another form of altruism—a sacrifice undertaken for the sake of one's existing family (Pande 2010a, b). Thus, choice itself comes to be constructed within interesting frames of agency—one that comes to occupy the landscape of Indian feminist activism and critique of how Indian surrogate mothers are coerced into entering a commercial surrogacy arrangement (Karat 2012). This is why the focus on the surrogate mother's narratives has brought forth a more nuanced perspective regarding her choice and motivations (Deomampo 2013; Roberts 1998; Teman 2010)—engaging specifically with the surrogate mother in different cultural contexts and the ways in which they understand their role in it. Prema's narrative too is a step in that direction, in the way it problematizes choice, presenting Prema as an agentic subject, yet demonstrates how Prema rejects the notions of choice in her depiction of her reasons to become a surrogate.

Prema was entering a surrogacy agreement against her husband's advice. Her discomfort is evident during the embryo transfer where she feels violated and like a participant in an intimate act that only her husband

is entitled to. The hidden rhetoric of sex and intimacy constantly marks the arrangement. As one IVF specialist explained, although surrogates and their husbands are told that the surrogacy arrangement involves no sexual intercourse, yet "The husbands have a mindset about putting in someone else's sperm into their wives' body—for them it is almost like the sexual act." And even though the fertilized embryo is transferred into the womb of the surrogate, the analogy is threatening enough.

Prema, like so many other surrogates, enters the surrogacy arrangement for her children and her husband. In that sense, she positions herself as the ideal mother. Amrita Pande (2010a, b) identifies this as another form of altruism where the surrogate mother places her choice to be a surrogate not vis-à-vis the adoptive mother (unlike in the accounts of Levine 2003; Ragoné 1996), but in relation to her children and family. So, she has "no choice" in doing surrogacy—an idea that is replicated in the term "*majboori*" or a kind of duress or necessity. Forced into circumstances that force her to desire a child for someone else out of wedlock is very much positioned as an act arising out of necessity. Even though it does not involve sexual relations, the subtext seems to imply linkages with prostitution—"*uss tarah ka kaam*" (that kind of work) that Prema so vehemently says she does not do.

To overcome the stigma of being associated with "dirty work", such as prostitution, surrogate mothers reiterated their lack of choice in wanting to do "this kind of work". This logic was embedded within the larger narrative that positioned the surrogate mother within eulogized attributes of motherhood, including "sacrifice" and "higher loyalties" (thereby also placing her in opposition to the "non-mother" prostitute [Ghosh 2011]). Thus, the surrogates undertook this work for the sake of their children and their education. Viewed from a relational perspective, the "lack of choice" is dictated by bonds of kin and relationships—amply evident in Prema's reading of her choice of entering surrogacy.

Like Pande's analysis, *majboori* was a recurring theme among the surrogate mothers trying to position their intention vis-à-vis surrogacy as dictated by "economic desperation…higher motivation, or by emphasizing the role of a higher power in making the decision for them" (Pande 2010a, b: 303). This was an accepted part of the rhetoric that came to dominate recruitment into surrogacy programs. Paromita, the agent who had recruited Prema, sympathized with her story of "fallen times" and drew her into the program with the promise of "better times to come". She candidly noted while Prema narrated her story, "I have heard that

they were very rich back in their village…until the misfortune of her husband's illness. I keep telling Prema it will all come back". Yet, the plea for a raise was ignored.

However, Prema continued to "demand" her right to an equitable pay. She rattled Paromita with her assertion of bodily integrity, which many of the other surrogates unquestioningly surrendered, by walking out of the ET room. In this sense, for Prema "*majboori*" was not necessity but "desperation". She gathers courage and rebels in an act of courage that positions her as an active agent. Her desperation drives her, first, to fight with her father and husband to enter the arrangement, and then to protest against the lack of consent in the act of intruding into her body. And even though she ultimately does undergo the ET, it is not without a fight.

In this sense, *majboori* as desperation and not necessity signals the pursuit of life-changing, life-affirming routes. It does not necessarily draw from eulogized or normativized roles of being as in the case of Pande's analysis of surrogates who placed their choice in the pursuit of higher goals.

Here, experiences of divorce and remarriage among urban poor women in Delhi find an echo in the notion of "*majboori*". "[*M*]*ajboori*, a vernacular term signifying vulnerability, powerlessness, and helplessness—is a statement that a woman is experiencing a tumultuous phase, that she lacks alternatives, and that she is no longer in control of her life…while *majboori* conjured powerlessness, it paradoxically also signals agency" (Grover 2011: 75). When women unable to live in an unhappy marriage move out and seek residence or conjugal bonds with other men, they may term their situation as arising out of *majboori*—but as Grover notes, this is a form of strategy by which the woman forges new alliances and enters into new relationships. It is also an effective "pragmatic" way of distancing herself from the stigma of divorce and unmarried cohabitation with another man.

Many of the surrogates interviewed resisted social approbation by challenging society to judge them for the choices they made. When asked about how they would navigate the pregnancy with nosey neighbors and relatives, many of them said that they did not care what the neighbors thought as they were not the ones offering help. However, brave this admonition "desperation" was the source of such an open call to resistance. They may eventually hide it, or better still recruit other women to become surrogates by displacing their sense of *majboori* among others—either way *majboori* as desperation acted as a catalyst to take on an otherwise stigmatizing work that required bodily compromise.

As actors, Indian surrogate mothers came to position their choice in a manner that questioned the value placed on women's role as mothers. They too were mothers but were also willing to gestate and carry a child for someone else for the express reason of enhancing their situation to better living. Thus, distancing themselves from the unborn fetus and the surrogacy process was a strategy of survival. Unlike in Pande's research, very few of the surrogate interviewed expressed any form of enduring attachment to the fetus, or to the idea of carrying someone's child. The transaction was taken on as a transaction. It helped that she had a close to nonexistent relationship with the intended parents—her intention in keeping it that way was encouraged by agencies, and often actively sought by the surrogate as well. As distant strangers sharing a close tie, surrogate mothers and intended parents internalized different ideas of intention—which are discussed below.

"*India as a Country and Culture Is Their Mother*": Choosing to Be a Father

A cultural manager in Madrid, 45-year-old Xavier's quest for a child had been a seven-year long struggle. He tried international adoption but found that he was exempt due to his single status from most countries' eligibility list. In Africa, where he was eligible, however, he found himself at the bottom of the ladder on the list of eligible parents. Finally, exasperated and worried that he was getting older and would be unable to take care of a child, Xavier opted for surrogacy. The prohibitive costs in the USA made him turn to India again through an Internet search. After contacting a Mumbai-based agency dealing in surrogacy (whom he found to be very professional), the lack of any friends or family in the city proved to be a deterrent. Instead, he turned to Delhi where he had a close friend and asked her to look up a clinic for him. The friend replied with positive reports and Xavier came to Delhi to initiate the process.

In 2011, his twin girls were born to a 38-year-old Indian surrogate in a hospital in Delhi. Xavier was in the hospital during the delivery along with the surrogate's husband, and he felt them bond at that crucial moment. Xavier had wanted a surrogacy arrangement where he could form a bond with the surrogate and her family. He wanted to be able to make it an equitable arrangement where the surrogate was compensated adequately during the process. The desire to make the entire process into something

more than a transaction was very important to him, which is why he was keen on meeting his surrogate and her family and create some sort of a dialogue, if not a relationship.

These considerations also led him to stay at his friend's place during and after the surrogacy process was completed—in order to be with family and to welcome his babies in a familial atmosphere instead of in a hotel. However, the process of having children had been initially difficult—Xavier remembers that he had to go through two surrogates before the clinic zeroed in on the surrogate who carried and gave birth to his girls.

When the babies were finally born, Xavier had to tread the long process of getting citizenship from the Spanish embassy that included a parallel process of verification from the Indian government. He had preferred to approach the surrogacy process in India as a single man, seeing that positioning himself as gay could pose problems, and also because initially in the process he was single. Throughout the citizenship and verification, he maintained his "single status" not knowing how government officials and other people in India would react to his being gay. The clinic, however, knew and seemed to have no problems with it.

The surrogate mother was recognized as the legal "mother" by the Spanish embassy—as she was the one who had given birth. She had to go there to give her consent to the babies being taken away by Xavier to Spain. This went along with the mandatory DNA test required to ascertain that the babies were genetically Xavier's. The surrogate mother had to provide her own identity details as well as a proof of marriage. Because she had a Hindu ritual wedding, her marriage had to be legally recognized by a notary. For this, the surrogate and her husband appeared in front of the notary to legalize their many years of marriage.

Despite the two differing sets of laws, the two common points were ascertaining paternity and relinquishing maternal rights.

> At the Spanish Embassy she was legally the mother… she had to 'allow' me to take the babies out of the country…she had to give permission to the father of the babies to let them travel with him. The exit visa comes from India for which one has to go to the Ministry of External Affairs and the FRRO[3]. Before the stamp on the visa, an inquiry is done—an investigation and verification of the documents. They too meet the surrogate mother and ascertain if she was part of the agreement of her own free will or was she coerced. She is asked to sign—this was the only instance I can remember when she was without her husband.

Once in Spain, Xavier went to the local tribunal and scrapped the name of the surrogate from the babies' birth certificates (for which he had to furnish all his documents including the contract, notarized documents of the surrogate relinquishing rights over the baby), and his partner (who he had met during the pregnancy) legally adopted the girls in a parental order.[4]

Xavier had recently celebrated his daughters' first birthday, all the while staying in touch with the surrogate's family. He often spoke to the surrogate's son—"I'm in touch with her son who always likes to have some news about my babies, but not directly with her. I think the money is helping the education of their son and daughter but she wanted to buy a new house (I'm not sure if she did)".

In reply to my query about what he will tell his girls regarding their birth and conception, Xavier said:

> I intend to transmit to the girls that to have babies is a question of love but sometimes the way for the conception is different, but behind the decision there is always love. I will explain to them everything and even show them photographs of the surrogate mother pregnant, in hospital, etc. But I will explain to them that the egg is from an anonymous Indian student. *To me it is more important that they understand that India as a country and culture is their mother* (*emphasis added by author*).

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Xavier's experiences in India as a single gay father of twin girls born through the transnational commercial gestational surrogacy arrangement focuses largely on the citizenship process as it was navigated with the Indian authorities. He had "done his homework" regarding the citizenship process and did it himself, unlike the other foreign couples interviewed who hired touts, or paid their lawyers to undertake the cumbersome bureaucratic process. Xavier hired a local taxi driver to ferry him to the offices and embassy, as well as negotiate communication in Hindi with bureaucratic staff. However, the process had to be navigated in a way that positioned him differently in relation to the two different forms of bureaucratic processes: the Spanish state and the Indian state.

The Spanish state allows gay couples and single men and women to adopt. Its largely liberal attitude is seen in the passing of a single marriage law that makes no distinction in the sex of the partners for the purpose of a civil marriage (Howell and Marre 2006). Xavier notes that it was this

law that helped him marry his French partner in Spain recently. A similar liberal stance therefore allows the use of assisted reproductive technologies (ARTs) by lesbian and single women, and the associated use of donor sperm and egg.

However, surrogacy is not allowed as per the act that governs ARTs.

> No contract which provides for gestation, with or without payment, by a woman who renounces her maternal bonds in favour of the contractor, or of a third party, shall have any legal validity whatsoever. The filiation of children born by substitute gestation will be determined at birth. (Boada et al. 2003: 272).

Here, the woman who gestates is identified as the mother of the child, and the maternal bond is seen to be indissoluble. This is in keeping with beliefs that even though the birth of a child is an act undertaken with the joint participation of the woman and man, the mother nurtures the child, while the father is responsible for conception and identity (Manrique 2009).

Both altruistic and commercial surrogacy are banned in Spain. However, the fact that the Act makes provisions for the determination of filiation of children born from such arrangements means that it is willing to accept the children, though not the practice of commercial gestational surrogacy itself. This gives enough space for using cross-border surrogacy agreements within existing laws.

This is reflected in the way in which Xavier is able to reverse the original birth certificate and citizenship documents that listed the name of the surrogate as the mother of the girls, to be replaced with the name of his partner as co-parent in a legal order. The Spanish state is seen by Howell and Marre (2006) as far more liberal in its stance as compared to Spanish society which values familial relations based on blood, and the nuclear family following the deep influence that the Catholic Church exercises here.

The stance of the Spanish state toward surrogacy leads to a steady stream of single men and gay couples (aside heterosexual couples) who seek gestational surrogacy services in India. Reportedly, “On an average, we get 10–15 requests for surrogacy in India from Spain” notes an agent in a newspaper item (Jha 2012). This is in contravention to a “letter” circulated by the consul-generals of countries including Spain, Belgium, France, Italy and others in India to IVF clinics in Mumbai asking them to direct their respective citizens to the embassies before initiating a surrogacy

arrangement. "The aim of the letter…was to ensure that citizens [of these countries] were aware of the laws of their countries, the legal procedures and the possible delays in returning home with their children" (Roy 2010).

Thus, despite the surrogacy "ban", Spain is willing to negotiate with its citizens for the purpose of the "welfare of the child"—according to a French cultural attaché based in New Delhi. The attaché notes that though vehemently against surrogacy, when faced with the problem of a couple seeking citizenship of a child already born through surrogacy, the Consular staff tried to look for solutions—if not there was much hue and cry back home, asking the government to consider the plight of the baby and the stranded parents (as is seen in the case of Israeli Dan Goldberg and in the case of the Norwegian mother discussed by Kroløkke (2012)).

Xavier notes that the primary focus of the Spanish consulate in Delhi is determining that the surrogate mother has willingly relinquished the baby, while the Indian bureaucracy ascertains that the surrogate mother has entered the arrangement willingly. Her consent is sought by both the governments as part of their recognition of her status as "mother". Here, the anonymity of the egg donor exempts her from the examination and state scrutiny of her involvement. The physicality of the pregnant surrogate identifies her as the mother—however, while she relinquishes she also must give her consent to the father to take away the babies. Thus, the relinquishment is partial—as the Spanish state continues to recognize her as the legal mother until the babies are in Spain and the tribunal reissues a new parental order.

The surrogate also had to give consent to Xavier's taking the babies out of the country, as the embassy recognized her as the mother. This ambiguity in the child's identity in being a full citizen is reflected in the conditional acceptance of the surrogate as the mother of the children. It is resurrected in many of the documents (birth certificate, family photograph with the new born), but also in the way the embassies/high commissions treat the status of the mother in the surrogacy arrangement, considering there is more than one "mother" in the arrangement: the egg donor and the surrogate. But the one thing that remains constant is the identity of the father—the only traceable biogenetic identity that the paternity test upholds.

While wanting to, and retaining cordial ties with the surrogate's family in India Xavier is quick to reissue a new parental order granting legitimacy

to his marriage and family with his partner. His identification of "India as a culture and country" as the mother of his babies negates the presence of the woman who carried them. The identification with a culture is an interesting trope employed by other parents wishing to make trips to India in the future with their children, to tell them about their "heritage". "Juam and Mauro (a Spanish gay couple who had twin girls in a clinic in Delhi through surrogacy) wanted their children to retain their Indian roots and hence named them Jaya and Uma. 'I love this country for all it has given to me and will keep coming here', said Mauro" (Jha 2011). It is a common practice in cross-border surrogacy agreements where parents shift the parentage from the surrogate mother to a country and culture (Deomampo 2013; Vora 2013). This is similar to the ways in which transnationally adopted children are "kept in touch with their roots" through the celebration of traditional festivals and root trips to the countries where they were born (Howell 2003).

The transposition of genetic and biological connectedness to cultures and nations helps couples and their countries to assimilate these children more effectively. One of the major reasons why surrogacy in India is tolerated by many of the European countries despite the ban in their own countries is due to the promise of new citizens. Unlike transnational adoption, which requires the creation of a discourse around the incorporation of ethnically and racially different children into their "destination" cultures (Dorow 2006; Howell 2003; Yngvesson 2010), in surrogacy the phenotypic resemblances that children share with their parents make the task that much easier. Despite the claims made by the French cultural attaché that "These parents [of children born through surrogacy] are parents of intent, not biological parents. They have a partial genetic link.", many of the European countries are embracing children born through surrogacy by invoking their own standards of biology and genes.

Conclusion

The ways in which surrogate mothers and gay couples come to occupy transnational commercial surrogacy arrangements in India may not be represented in entirety by the two narratives discussed above, but Prema and Xavier's stories are symbolic of the forms of negotiations that they may undertake while participating in the arrangement.

In the complicated narrative of transnational commercial gestational surrogacy, privilege and access become complicit in political and market considerations of exclusions and inclusions. The neoliberal market defines and usurps choices to a large extent (Strathern 1996), nonetheless as we see to participate may be precipitated by multiple factors that may seem as led by a lack of choice, but the choice to stay on in the arrangement is governed by a form of seeking legitimacy. For both Xavier and Prema, the arrangement is fraught with moments and processes that delegitimize (for Prema the embryo transfer; for Xavier the seeking of citizenship), and yet their navigation of these processes signals a moment of triumph.

As Laura Mamo (2005: 242) so succinctly notes, "Thus, the move of corporate biomedicine as a culture is indicative of the biomedical and economic factors. As a commodity, sperm is marketed and sold to consumers within the context of a biomedical industrial complex (i.e. commercial sperm bank industry), and as customers seeking services, lesbians respond. Although not the imagined or state legitimated producers of 'families', lesbian parents-to-be use sperm banks to produce kin and, in doing so, challenge the state's denial of queer citizens' right to produce families". So, while gay couples challenge the state, they pander to the neoliberal marketplace of available wombs and genetic material to form families and kin. And similarly, while surrogates facilitate the counter-geographies of globalization, they also reclaim their space within it.

Notes

1. An IVF cycle costs a minimum of INR 50,000/- (USD 800–900), and the cost of hiring a surrogate mother and her subsequent diet can be within INR 100,000—300,000 (USD 1500–5000). The entire arrangement including medicine, multiple IVF cycles, delivery and surrogate fees is usually between one million to one and a half million Indian rupees (USD 16,000–25,000).
2. This is one of the surrogacy agencies that were part of ethnography.
3. The foreign regional registration office (FRRO) issues exit visas to foreigners leaving India. In case of surrogacy, they have been important government functionaries in determining parentage of the child born from the arrangement and the role of the Indian surrogate within it.
4. He had met and married his French partner in Spain where as per law any two individuals can get married—not limiting it to gender, sexuality or race.

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CHAPTER 10

Families on the Market Front

Adi Moreno

Introduction

By 2012, cross-border surrogacy had become a common route to fatherhood in Israel, especially in the gay community, with more than a hundred babies born annually.[1] These numbers reflect a shift in parenting modes and ideals within this community, which currently portrays surrogacy as an ideal family type for male-gay couples (Moreno 2016). Several factors make Israel an ideal research site for the analysis of the shifts in family norms, and the reconstruction of kinship through the lens of assisted reproductive technology (ART). These factors include the relatively high profile of surrogate use, the level and volume of public discourse concerning this practice, the large number of gay men involved in this practice,[2] as well as the high percentage of ART usage among the population at large.

While surrogacy stories were depicted in national media as a heroic struggle for a valued cause, other voices were also presented, depicting surrogacy as exploitative, rooted in gross economic and gendered inequalities, or simply a new manifestation of male control over female bodies. These critics link surrogacy with other forms of commodification of poor, Global South' people's bodies: prostitution, organ trafficking and slavery.

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My analysis situates surrogacy in the tension between these two opposing views, by demonstrating that cross-border reproductive services entail the transformation of the reproductive body into a site of profit-making and value extraction, and simultaneously a site for the creation of new relationships, intimacies and a site of agency and border-crossing, in more than one sense. In addressing these aspects of the reproductive trade, I aim to address broader questions pertaining to the relations of self and work, self and market production, and the meaning of affective labor within the reproductive market. In this site, a combination of technical outcomes, for-profit market interests and legal frameworks interacts with participants' notions of kinship, fairness, reciprocity and care in creating, transforming and reproducing social and material ties.

In the following chapter, I concur with parts of Pande's critique of liberal feminist discourses, especially in relation to the limitation of the "commodification" theorem. By using Viviana A. Zelizer's analysis of the social dimensions of monetary exchanges (Zelizer 1989, 2005), and with empirical data gathered from Israeli gay men who became fathers through surrogacy, I show that surrogacy is never merely a financial transaction, and that complex social ties and obligations are created through surrogacy processes. I further advance this critique by discussing surrogacy as a multifaceted and dynamic set of relations, involving human subjects as well as technologies, material objects and discursive practices. The social relationships and intimacies that are created within surrogacy agreements do not diminish the economic dimensions of these procedures, and as I further demonstrate do not increase the level of care and commitment toward the needs and desires of reproductive laborers who take part in these relations. On the contrary, the affect and intimacy created in the process is directed at the financial trade, enabling it and serving the needs of the market. These affects are therefore transient and dependent, and can and do change abruptly when the terms of the economic exchange are modified.

Surrogacy, therefore, becomes a unique site for the research of the relationship between self and work, self and market production, and a unique example of the affective market. In this site, a combination of technical outcomes, for-profit market interests and legal frameworks interacts with participants' notions of kinship, fairness, reciprocity and care in creating, transforming and reproducing social ties and relationalities.

Surrogacy as Contested Field

During the 1970s and 1980s, feminist scholars responded to the challenges of reproductive medicine and reproduction commerce with caution and, sometimes, outright hostility (Franklin 2013). In collections of essays, manifestos and ethnographic works, scholars such as Gena Corea and Rita Arditti warned against the heightened control over the female body that would be achieved and mediated through the presence of medically assisted conception, IVF technologies and surrogacy. Gena Corea wrote about these technologies:

> producing sons for men has been a prime function of woman. Now, through technology, men may someday be able to employ her for this purpose with minimal human involvement (Corea 1986, 221).

According to Corea, surrogacy transforms reproduction into a non-relational technical method, eliminating social contact between the reproducer and the commissioning parent/s, and irrevocably commodifying female bodies and female reproductive capabilities.

But surrogacy is a contested issue among feminists, bioethicists and ethnographers. For some, surrogacy can offer a route out of compulsory heterosexuality and the nuclear family model (Teman 2010b), and is often the only viable possibility for gay men to have genetic offspring (Lev 2006).

Feminist ethnographies present the complexity of surrogacy relations as embedded in gross social, racial and economic global inequalities (Banerjee 2014; Ikemoto 2009; Roberts 2009), and at the same time as a site of agency, and even resistance, for women in the Global South with limited economic and social possibilities (Pande 2009a, b, 2010a). The term *commodification*, in this last view, becomes in itself a tool for de-subjectifing the surrogate and ignoring her own desires and life choices. Moreover, the intimacy and emotional attachments that are created within surrogacy processes are shared by the commissioning parents and the surrogates, and can create a shared project that is empowering and fulfilling for all parties involved (Teman 2010a). Thus, surrogacy, according to ethnographers such as Pande and Teman among others, is a form of labor and should be treated as such. Framing surrogacy thus is a political attempt to improve working conditions for surrogates, and to protect their rights.

My analysis is based on research conducted in Israel with gay-commissioning fathers, surrogacy agents, and doctors and policy makers between July 2012 and February 2013. The fieldwork consisted of 39 in-depth interviews, including 23 with surrogacy parents, 16 who commissioned surrogacy in India and seven in the United States. Research participants were at different stages of the surrogacy process: early negotiations, during pregnancy and up until a few years after their children were born out of surrogacy arrangements. This research is part of a doctoral-level research study into the phenomenon of parenthood through surrogacy in the Israeli gay community.

I use the narratives of commissioning fathers in order to present a new perspective on the debates concerning reproductive commodification and the relationship between commodification, alienation, gender relations and kinship. I show how surrogacy operates as a new form of kinship, indicating long-term familial ties and codependence; simultaneously functions as a type of global stratified marketplace, one which develops through extracting *biovalue* from reproductive laborers (Waldby 2002), mainly women from the Global South who sell/employ their reproductive capacities, and offers reproductive futures to mainly affluent western parents.

The analysis is based on the consumer's perception of the reproductive market. As such, I do not presume to represent the desires and intentions that prompt reproductive laborers to enter the market exchange, and I am not able to account for the surrogates' responses to the incidents that will be discussed throughout the chapter. I therefore focus on the commissioning fathers' own conceptualization of the situation, together with an analysis of the material and legal contexts that encapsulate surrogacy relationships, discussing their intrinsic inequality and potential harm to reproductive laborers.

Reproduction and Bodies as Commodities

The markets in gametes, reproductive tissues and gestation quite literally dissolve the boundaries between production and reproduction, producing surplus value from what Rose terms "life itself" (Rose 2001). According to Waldby and Cooper (2008), these markets produce "a kind of labor that has been traditionally available to women but which has only recently been medicalized, technologized and standardized to an extent where it can be organized on a global scale" (Ibid:59).

The production of value from human biological processes and tissue therefore breaches the fundamental differentiation between subjects and things, which underlie the production of capitalist markets (Hoeyer 2013). According to Hoeyer (ibid.), a basic construct of market thinking is this separation of "exchange partners" from "exchange objects," and their linking through the mode of ownership. Human beings, body parts, sexualities and intimacies are thought of as belonging outside the sphere of the market. Therefore, setting a price tag on human life is against the very core of human dignity, and a violation of Kant's categorical imperative:

> Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never merely as a means to an end, but always at the same time as an end (Kant 1999[1785]).

Yet, markets for bodies, body parts and intimate practices predate capitalism, and their expansion is an intrinsic part of the growing global capitalism of the current era (Scheper-Hughes 2003). These bodies-as-commodities are manifest in the fields of medicine and reproduction, alongside older markets such as slave labor and sex work (Scheper-Hughes and Wacquant 2003). But what does it mean when bodies or bodily functions are sold on a global market? How shall we treat subjects who take part as sellers and as commodities? Are there direct implications for the phenomenon of "commodification of human value" in terms of social relations, of justice and of human dignity?

For Marx (Marx 1867; Dodd 2014), commodities are a form of alienated labor, detached from the individual laborer and abstracted through the process of monetary exchange. Following Marx, Simmel (1903) claims that as social relations become increasingly mediated through money, they become more abstract and featureless. Our everyday encounters become depersonalized, and qualitative aspects of value are reduced and replaced by quantitative measurements (ibid., p. 23). At the same time, Simmel also saw money as a form of a strong social bond, a shared illusion which enhances shared understandings among members of the same economic circle through the expansion of interaction among different members of society. Hypothetically, the ties that are formed through cross-border third-party reproductive services could be seen by Simmel as both an abstraction of familial ties and an increased bond between people in very distant geographic and social locations.

Another form of Marxist intimate market analysis is proposed by Arlie R. Hochschild (2003, 2011b). In contemporary capitalism, Hochschild suggests, the laborer is not just detached from the material fruits of her labor. More and more industries and positions require workers to manipulate their emotional presentation, and to create an emotional/affective sphere as part of the process of production. As the emotions are produced for the market, and controlled by market demands, they are no longer "owned" by the laborer; her range of feelings and desires becomes flattened, an effect that often extends beyond work hours. In her recent work, Hochschild explicates the arduous labor performed by reproductive laborers (among other groups) in order to maintain the required dispositions toward the fetuses they gestate, and toward the intended parents (Hochschild 2011a).

To summarize, commercial surrogacy is an assemblage of bio-markets which create surplus value out of the technology of gamete extraction, in vitro fertilization and the female bodily capacity of gestation. It is a commodity market, where buyers can choose the most desirable genetic traits, lineage or the most accommodating surrogacy contract. It is also a labor market which employs women and men, whose labor is to subject their bodies to medical technologies or to provide the fruits of their bodily capacities. Analyzing reproductive markets as a form of labor and not as a commodity exchange, suggest Waldby and Cooper (2008), enhances the rights of laborers over material produced in their body and their bodily integrity (ibid.,67).

Laufer-Ukeles (2013) proposes the depiction of surrogacy as a form of commodity exchange, one which nonetheless maintains human values and not just market values: an incomplete commodity, in short. Laufer-Ukeles bases her argument on Radin's (1996) concept of *mixed commodities*. Some commodities undergo what Radin terms "incomplete commodification," and therefore are never treated as mere commodities. These commodities entail social relations and norms as well as market value. Human embryos are a very potent example of such commodities.

Laufer-Ukeles (2013) explains:

> What makes surrogate motherhood so difficult to navigate is that it is a transaction in commercial intimacy, and it is hard to take account of commerciality and intimacy simultaneously (Ibid., 1226).

In evaluating surrogacy, Laufer-Ukeles suggests, we should take both the monetary and the relational, intimate aspects of the engagement

into serious consideration. Depicting only the commercial aspect of the relationship ignores the intimacies that evolve during surrogacy contracts, and fails to acknowledge the desires and emotions of women who operate as commercial surrogates. On the other hand, to overlook the commercial operation of surrogacy is indeed ignoring a plethora of problematic labor and commercial relations, potentially harmful to and exploitative of women, especially when the divide between commissioning parents and surrogates is significant in terms of economic and political power.

Subjects who participate in reproductive markets (as consumers, sellers or medical professionals) employ dynamic and orchestrated discerning and framing practices that recreate the boundaries between subjects and objects in these markets. Thompson defined this process as an "ontological choreography" (2005, 8), in which different ontological orders are presented together, maintaining the image of bodily integrity and subjectivity. At the same time, the process enables the objectification of body parts by subjecting them to the medical-professional gaze. These ontologies extend the subjectivity of women who take part in the reproductive effort because they enable them to achieve pregnancy and motherhood, not feasible beforehand, but they can also fail and intensify the objectification of participants. The outcome of this subjectification and objectification is closely tied with the outcome of the reproductive effort—as we shall also see in this chapter.

In my analysis, I introduce Viviana Zelizer's (1989, 1994, 2005) theory of the social construction of money. Zelizer demonstrates how people differentiate between different kinds of money (or different monies), each bearing different meanings and serving different purposes (e.g. pocket money, household money, savings and income). An exchange of money for goods is not always perceived as bearing the same social meaning. In her systemic framework, money transfers can take one of three primary ideal types: payment (compensation), gift or entitlement (Zelizer 2005). Each type differs in the form of social relationship that it creates, through the level of commitment, the enforcement mechanisms it involves and the meanings that the transactions generate to the social ties created through it.

The narratives of surrogacy fathers provide insights into how these monetary transactions are perceived and negotiated by participants in surrogacy transactions. As has been well documented by other commentators on reproductive technologies (Franklin 2013; Nahman 2008; Pande 2011), reproductive goods are often articulated in the form of "gifts," and not as compensation for labor or for a commodity. I will show how preg-

nancy and the child itself are presented as a gift in the narratives related by the commissioning fathers, as well as the social desires that the gift entails. However, in contrast to Zelizer's articulation, I show that more often than not, these relations are polymorphous, and their framing and understanding can be—and is—malleable to changes of script according to commercial needs, changing desires or medical failures. Therefore, it is not enough to analyze how people perceive a certain transaction in a given moment in time, and within a certain explanatory concept. Changes over a period of time, and their results, will also serve as basis for this analysis, as will be explained further on.

Bearing in mind these different articulations of surrogacy—as a commercial act, as labor relations, as social relations and as an incomplete multidimensional combination of market and social relations—I shall now move on to analyzing the narratives of commissioning fathers, and how they articulate the surrogacy relationships and contracts they initiated.

We Exchange Pain with Hope

While assisted reproduction technologies—especially the cross-border for-profit markets of surrogacy—take place in public, market-oriented arenas, for many participants in this trade these markets carry very intimate meanings, attachments and desires. Thus, for many of the commissioning fathers I interviewed, surrogacy presented a moral conflict. On the one hand, they felt sadness and discomfort over the terms of surrogacy, which in many cases necessitated the employment of poor illiterate women from Global South countries, but on the other hand, this was for them the only viable way to achieve the family life that they so desired. One discursive pattern that emerged from the interviews was a foregrounding of the non-material aspects of surrogacy, while also finding justifications within the pro-market, pro-choice logic that informs the participation of surrogates in this trade.

In order to explain how these two patterns operate together, I present a case study of a surrogacy process, which took place in India and was documented in an Israeli national newspaper by Ilan Seinfeld, a poet, novelist and a veteran activist in the Israeli gay community. Seinfeld is also the father of twins born out of a surrogacy contract in India, and an avid supporter of surrogacy. Seinfeld expresses his opinions through his blog, Facebook page and occasional articles published in national newspapers.

I quote here from one of his first publications, "*We exchange pain with hope*." The text begins with a description of Seinfeld's first encounter with surrogacy in India:

> In Delhi I met my previous surrogate. A small woman, approximately one and a half meters tall, her head bowed down. I asked her to sit, and thanked her from the bottom of my heart for her gesture. The clinic worker translated my words. She asked her whether she would like to sign with a pen or otherwise. Then she left the room and came back with an ink pad. ...
>
> The contract was 43 pages long, and [the surrogate] stood and pressed her thumb to the bottom of every page, tearing my heart apart with each press. This was the moment I realized for the first time that I am striking a deal with an illiterate woman, of a low social-economic status, who needs my money… [*Yedioth Ahronot*, 17.3.12]

The first encounter with surrogacy is an encounter of miscommunication, of revelations and of strong emotions. The author describes his feelings toward the Indian surrogate, highlighting her submissive demeanor and clear illiteracy. The scenario demonstrates the power differences between the participants, as he is in position to request the surrogate to sit ("I asked her to sit"). There is no direct communication between the parties to the surrogacy contract: his words are mediated through an agency worker, and the surrogate herself remains mute. This encounter is troublesome for the commissioning father, as he observes that the surrogate is signing a contract which she is unable to read or negotiate. The emotional burden is described as "tearing my heart apart."

After signing the contract, Seinfeld returned to his hotel room, saddened and conflicted about the transaction he was taking part of. But an encounter with a couple of friends changed his mind. As he explains:

> Luckily, a few hours later I was invited to dinner at an Israeli couple's residence. When I entered their house, downcast, they asked what had happened to me. I told them the story. "You know", they said smiling, "with the money that you will pay the clinic for surrogacy, your surrogate could buy a house in Delhi, or rent a flat for a few years and pay for food and education for her children."

The father to-be represents the first, and widely shared moral stance, which sees for-profit surrogacy as problematic, even exploitative, especially

when it uses the bodies of the poorest populations: illiterate women in the Global South. But this viewpoint is immediately answered by a pro-market approach, which measures the value of the market transaction by the outcome of the compensation. The deal is legitimate due to the size of the compensation, which will enable the reproductive laborer to finance her family and guarantee her children better future through education. As a form of justification, what is proposed here is an argument that Sykes and Matza (2002) describe as a *denial of injury,* that is, a questionable act was performed but due to the outcome—mutual gain by both sides—this act should be accepted.

But this text goes beyond justification within the market. After presenting the deal as fair, Seinfeld transforms the exchange into a form of reciprocal social relations, he narrates:

> This is not a nefarious business transaction, but an exchange of suffering. I take away your pain and allow you, with my money, to buy a home for you and take care of your children's living conditions. You bestow upon me, in your grace, your genetic traits and the right to become a father. In an advanced global world, albeit full of evil and injustice, a couple of free human beings, a man and a woman, come together in order to exchange pain with hope. I do not see this as exploitation, but rather as a grand human gesture.

The framing of the exchange is intriguing. First, the parties exchange emotions, not money nor goods. As the title "we exchange pain with hope" alluded to. Moreover, despite the previous articulation of the fairness of the deal, this exchange is not depicted as payment or compensation in Zelizer's (2005) terms. It is neither direct nor described as mandatory, but rather a mutual exchange of gifts: "I allow you, with my money," and then "you bestow upon me, in your grace."

Mauss' seminal text on the gift (Mauss 1954) shows that gifts are never obligation free or spontaneous. On the contrary, gifting and receiving are actions that are guided by strict social norms and obligations, and create prolonged relations of reciprocity, commitment and gratitude. The receiver is obliged to respond to the gift and reciprocate, in the form of a similar gift or a greater gift, depending on the social context the exchange operates within. The exchange is therefore depicted as a gift, in order to trigger certain understandings in the reader, and an answer to views depicting surrogacy as a harsh market exchange which alienates the acts of reproduction and alienates women especially from the fruits of their labor (Hochschild 2011a). On the contrary, according to the author, the

surrogate is not a seller in a free market; she has the divine capability to bestow life upon others.

This notion of a mutual exchange of gifts between two free individuals, a man and a woman, creates a heterosexual-like kinship model, of mutual commitment and care, which produces a child. This gendered relation also follows the heterosexual ethos of the male breadwinner and female reproducer, where the woman cares for her (and his) children, while the man provides for all. The context, a global capitalist market economy, is described as advanced, but is also emotionless and exploitative. The capitalist market is also depicted as harmful for both men and women, who seek refuge both in and out of the market, in the form of human emotions and benevolent gifting. The financial trade is a means for the emotional trade, subsistence for the viability of the trade.

There is a strong disparity between the framing of the relationship and the practices that unfold through this narrative. The basis of gift exchange is mutual cultural context, one that creates the gift norms and defines the obligations of the receiver and giver. In this case, the gaps between the sides are overwhelming, and there is no actual negotiation of a mutual contract and understanding of the exchange. Moreover, surrogacy is a long and cumbersome process, involving multiple attempts at procreation and a lengthy gestation period; the gift, on the other hand, is centered around the birth of a healthy child, masking the efforts and labor that are an integral part of the process. The surrogate who was described in the beginning of the narrative as "the first surrogate" had a miscarriage in the first few weeks of the pregnancy. This is a common occurrence in surrogate pregnancies and pregnancies in general. However, under the terms of most common surrogacy contracts in India, this leaves the surrogate without remuneration for her efforts, work and risks undertaken. The author describes giving the surrogate monetary compensation, even though he was not obliged to do so under the contract (and therefore, again, is a gift of generosity). However, this compensation is far removed from the promise of the life-altering compensation that will help her care for her children.

Seinfeld's attempts to become a father did not end after the first failure. He contracted a second surrogate who successfully became pregnant with two embryos. However, the two reproductive parties (the genetic father and the surrogate) had no contact with each other during the pregnancy, and very little contact afterwards. Therefore, in this narrative the mutuality of the gift with its prolonged social ties remains as a strong desire on

the father's side, the desire to wrap the reproductive tale within normative understandings of reproductive commitments. However, as with many of the other stories I collected concerning surrogacy in India, these strong desires did not materialize into a full commitment, or even into encounters between fathers and surrogates.

As we shall see in the next section, the relationships between surrogates and commissioning parents are greatly affected by the regulations governing surrogacy, reproduction and childbirth in the surrogacy location. The following stories, of fathers who commissioned surrogacy pregnancies in the United States, show the complexity of surrogacy's social dimensions even when social encounter between parents and surrogates is indeed possible.

Intimate Strangers

While many commissioning fathers expressed the desire to build intimacy and reciprocity in surrogacy relations, the actual level of intimacy achieved through their surrogacy processes was greatly affected by the legal standards in the surrogacy location. According to testimonies from commissioning fathers and surrogacy agents, the standard surrogacy contract in India was signed retrospectively, which meant that the surrogate signed the contract after already entering the first trimester of the pregnancy. It was common, as I was repeatedly told, for surrogates to be replaced between embryo transfers in order to reduce waiting times and increase the chances of achieving pregnancy. In these settings, parents had very little or no contact with the surrogates carrying their babies, and many parents had no contact with the surrogate at all until childbirth.

In US surrogacy contracts, however, legal standards dictate that the parents sign a separate contract with each party that participates in the surrogacy process. Parents sign a contract with the US surrogacy agency, another with the egg donor database, and with the fertility clinic, the egg donor, and the surrogate. Each contract was negotiated separately, and the terms differed from one agency to another or even within the same agency. It was also customary—indeed almost mandatory—that the parents maintained direct contact with the surrogate during the pregnancy. These settings drastically altered the surrogacy relationships that were consequently created. Whereas from the 19 interviews with fathers who commissioned surrogacy in India only one couple maintained contact with the surrogate

during the whole pregnancy, all seven US parents interviewed for this research had ongoing communications with their surrogate during the pregnancy. The contact consisted of weekly calls, visits and socializing with the surrogate's extended family, in a manner that mimicked the creation of kinship relations. Many of the commissioning parents maintained that these relationships persist after childbirth, in the form of distant familial relations.

If one were to chart the intensity of the relationship formed by surrogacy, then my findings would be located in the middle of the scale. They would lie somewhere between the conclusions drawn from Eli Terman's (2010) study of Israeli heterosexual couples who commissioned surrogates locally—which she describes as a dyadic relationship between the surrogate and the commissioning mother—and Amrita Pande's (2009a, b, 2010, 2014) findings from India, which stress the social distance and different understandings of the surrogacy process between the Indian surrogates and the foreign-commissioning agents.

However, all the ethnographic studies on the subject show similar ontological choreographies taking place within these intimate-commercial settings, which serve to obfuscate the financial aspects of the contract, and heighten the emotional and relational aspects of collaborative reproduction (Teman 2010a; Pande 2014). We shall now see two examples demonstrating how this choreography is achieved and maintained.

Gil is a gay man in his early 40s. We met on a Friday morning, while his daughter, Erin, took part in a holiday celebration in her nearby kindergarten. I asked Gil to describe the selection process that he and his partner employed in order to find a surrogate:

> We got an email. Lavie [Gil's partner] called from the other room to say that they found surrogate women for us. A lesbian couple. I came and had a look and said, "but the picture is of a man and a woman!" So … It turned out that the name of the surrogate's husband is a male name in Ireland… So we got information [about them], and we sent them ours … and then two weeks later, we flew to L.A to meet them and approve them. … it was a funny meeting in a way. They were very thrilled about having an Israeli couple. They said that, [pause]. They misread us. They said they are fans of Israel because everybody goes to the army here [in Israel], and they want mandatory army service in the US as well, and that all the Arabs should be killed. So they were very thrilled about this option [of providing surrogacy for an Israeli couple]. …

> But [pause] there was something about them. Such good chemistry. We came out of this meeting excited and with very good feeling. (interview transcript. 21.9.2012)

Cross-border surrogacy narratives are often filled with momentary misconceptions and misrecognitions. In Gil's story, the surrogate and her husband are at first identified as a lesbian couple, and later this assumption is corrected via a picture that is attached to their profile. There is also an opposite misconception, of the gay, secular, leftist Israeli couple who are perceived as avid Zionists and supporters of mandatory army service. Even so, the encounter is described as possessing positive qualities: good chemistry, excitement and optimism about the relationship.

These positive, optimistic feelings and trust were recurring themes in the narratives of the commissioning fathers who conducted their surrogacy process in the USA. Contrary to the Indian contracts, in the USA a separate contract is signed directly between the commissioning parents and the surrogate, after which both sides decide whether to proceed, and are free to negotiate the terms of the contract. There is also the expectation that communications throughout the pregnancy will be frequent and direct. The encounters were often described in terminology more suited to dating sites, even though the aim of the "date" is not to find a spouse, but it is still conceptualized as a partnership: a reproductive, intimate commercial partnership. This partnership requires careful, deliberate maintenance throughout the pregnancy. Gil continued to describe their developing relationship with the surrogate:

> …pretty quickly we realized that our surrogate really enjoyed this … being the production manager of our pregnancy. And [we realized] that as much as we gave her the stage to explain to us what should happen and all that, she just enjoyed it very much. […]. The surrogate came to our hotel with her husband and two children and we took them to breakfast. All of a sudden [pause]. It was like American suburbia was there in front of our eyes, sitting there. [We saw] men and women sitting there with oxygen masks, [weighing] 150 Kilos, stuffing their faces with pancakes […]. We went to breakfast with them and then they immediately invited us to her husband's family […] so we went to grandma and grandpa and … and so … she really managed our stay there.

Before and during the surrogate pregnancy, the couple described having regular Skype calls with the surrogate, sometimes including her husband

and children. These conversations are a mixture of information transfer (how is she feeling? What happened in previous medical examinations? Her day-to-day routine?), and attempts to get to know each other, share hobbies and find common ground. Gil and Lavie discover that the surrogate enjoys "managing their pregnancy." The biological body, which is pregnant, becomes a project to be planned, controlled and managed. By describing the surrogate is the project manager, the couple maintains the business mode of the transaction, but they also acknowledge the experience, knowledge and understanding that the surrogate has acquired through her previous (private) pregnancies.

In this account, surrogacy is similar to Radin's mixed-commodity model (Laufer-Ukeles 2013; Radin 1996), where the surrogacy contract is rich with social values, obligations and commitments (getting to know the extended family, going on family dinners and excursions, maintaining a positive, friendly and close atmosphere). However, it remains clear that this is also an economic exchange, that there is monetary compensation and contractual commitments. During these interactions, an elaborate and sensitive "ontological choreography" (Thompson 2005) takes place, in which the surrogacy contract is seldom invoked, but is replaced instead by notions of trust, benevolence and intimacy. Intimate information is shared and procedures are discussed, but money and contractual discussions are often performed on a different level, namely through a mediator, in the form of the American surrogacy agency. However, this mutual framing of the process of commercial surrogacy as intimate, reciprocal activity is delicate and fragile, as we see in the next step of Gil's narrative:

> Gil: During our pregnancy [the agency] replaced approximately nine case coordinators. So the last and most stupid of the case coordinators sent the hospital a very very aggressive letter, stating that we are the parents and that the surrogate does not have any rights to the child, and that she [pause] that it should be clear beyond doubt. And the surrogate received a copy of this [letter] from the hospital and she was terribly offended. She thought we sent it or that it was with our knowledge and she called us [in distress] like that. We were certain that something happened. It was so …
>
> Interviewer: What did she need to hear from you at this stage?
>
> Gil: That we trust her. Like [pause]. We already had the feeling during this whole time that we know that she is the manager of our pregnancy. That she is doing it. That we trust her. That we owe her our gratitude and we respect her and all those things that we really felt and were [pause] But all of

> a sudden, he created this feeling that made everything very alienated, very business-like … .And all right, [o]ur relationship and our contacts were such that we were able to explain to her that we received this letter together with her really. We were totally surprised and it turned to be about how much the agency [pause]. We actually found a common enemy.

The surrogacy agency plays an important and sensitive role in a commercial surrogacy agreement. It maintains a channel of communication regarding monetary and contractual commitments, keeping both parents and surrogates at arm's length from these discussions. The usage of a back channel in the form of an official case coordinator maintains the illusion of equal, reciprocal and close relations, while at the same time making sure that the contract is carried out as planned. The financial, contractual channel is also expected to operate quietly, a way to resolve misunderstandings, or to gently remind the parties of their contractual commitments when problems arise. The case coordinator breached this tacit agreement, by publicly declaring the contractual form of the relationship and thus making visible the power balance between the parties: the parents who own the baby, and a surrogate who, according to the agency's letter, has "no right to this baby." This description of the situation was not new to any of the participants in the trade, evidently, but voicing it meant distrust and distress, thus harming the delicate balance that was achieved in the relationship with much effort. Resolving the matter required finding once more the common ground where all reproductive collaborators could once again treat each other as equals: through posing the agency as a mutual threat, an outsider that is a common enemy of both sides (even though the agency was employed by the commissioning parents, and was to a certain extent an employer of the surrogate). Similar to the previous narrative by Ilan Seinfeld, the market appears here not in the form of an enabler to the relationship but rather as a hostile, outside threat, to be quickly renegotiated and removed from the social interactions between surrogate and commissioning parents. In Gil and Lavie's example, the disruption was resolved through a postnatal ceremony. As Gil describes it:

> Jessica [The surrogate] asked that we perform a ceremony. That when she is born, they will put her [the baby girl] in her arms and then she will deliver her to us. So the nurses filmed this ceremony for us and that's it. And then we were extremely excited. … Jessica held her a lot, her children came and held her, the grandmother came. … but she didn't breastfeed her and didn't give her milk.

During the long narrative describing the surrogacy relationship, Jessica was constantly referred to as "the surrogate." The first time that her name appears in the narrative is also the moment where Jessica exits the script agreed upon through the surrogacy contract, and narrates a script of her own by suggesting and performing a ceremony that she devised. This ceremony articulates childbirth as a gift: the baby girl is first symbolically placed in Jessica's hands, and then she willingly passes the baby on to the parents. The ceremony is filmed by the witnessing nurses. Similar to other kinship ceremonies, this is not a private ceremony. It is public and has social implications, signifying the rightful parents of the child from that point on, yet maintaining the place of the surrogate as a meaningful person in this process.

In staging the ceremony, Jessica reiterates the nature of surrogacy as an act of gift exchange. She thus places herself in the position of an agentic social actor choosing to give this precious gift to the parents, while placing a moral commitment of gratitude upon the commissioning parents, the recipients of the gift. The moment of birth is also the final moment of the commercial surrogacy contract, with the transfer of money and rights, but this happens outside the room, in legal and financial procedures.

Why is the gift symbolism so important in surrogacy contracts? According to Zelizer (2005), framing monetary exchange as gift relations may serve to destigmatize questionable relationships, signifying the voluntary and reciprocal nature of the exchange. By marking the surrogacy exchange as an altruistic gift, both the surrogates and the commissioning parents express the agency of the surrogate in entering the contract, and indeed in handing over the baby. It also de-commoditizes the child, who now becomes the outcome of a caring, reciprocal relationship. These examples also show the limits of the feminist discourses that depict surrogacy as mere coercion and exploitation. While these dimensions surely exist, it is also impossible to ignore the surrogates' agency in framing the relationship, and indeed in entering the contract and agreeing to undergo medical procedures and carry a pregnancy.

Gil and Lavie's story ended happily, with the birth of their daughter and forming a prolonged, grateful relationship with Jessica who gestated her. However, surrogacy contracts do not always reach full term, and do not always work for the benefit of the surrogate, as we can see through the story of Yaron and Jonathan, another Israeli gay couple who commissioned surrogacy pregnancy in the USA.

Controlling the Reproductive Body

I met Yaron and Jonathan during a surrogacy pregnancy they were commissioning with a US surrogate. We met in their apartment, in one of Tel-Aviv's skyscrapers. At the time of our meeting, they felt that their surrogacy process had become long and cumbersome, more than two years having elapsed between the event of first signing a contract with a US-based surrogacy agency and the medical and legal attempts finally yielding a pregnancy. From beginning to end, it was three years before their surrogate gives birth to their first child. They told me the story in chronological order, beginning with the initial surrogacy contract signing:

> When we arrived in Texas in order to meet [the surrogate], a day earlier we went to the clinic to provide sperm and go through our medical tests and speak with the doctor about the surrogate, since he had examined her earlier. And we entered the clinic in Texas and he told us, "Listen, I examined your surrogate and she is heavy. She is obese. In the BMI scale there is underweight, there is normal and there is obese and there is morbidly obese. These are the real fat ones." He said she is obese and this will be a dangerous pregnancy if she carries our pregnancy. [He told us that] either she needs to lose weight dramatically, or we need to look for another surrogate.
>
> We were already under a lot of stress. We flew over to Texas from here [Tel-Aviv] after a few months in touch with her. The day before we meet [her] he tells us to replace a surrogate? We said "no, we won't hear of that. How much weight does she need to lose?" We spoke with the agency the same day and [the agent] said that yes, the doctor spoke to her and she spoke with the surrogate and the surrogate swore that she will enter a diet regime and do sports and she will lose weight, whatever is needed. And we spent time… We spent three days with the surrogate and her husband and their child. Really a charming family and when you see her, then you see that she is fat but she isn't huge. …
>
> People do not discuss medical and financial issues directly with the surrogate, we always discussed these things through the agency and the agency assured us that she promised to go on a diet and lose weight. We said ok, she seems not so overweight to us, even though the numbers should have been a warning sign. (Interview transcript. 1.8.2012)

In common with Gil and Lavie, Yaron and Jonathan employed a US-based surrogacy agency to locate a surrogate for them. After several months of

contract negotiations and profile searches, the couple made a match with a surrogate from Texas. But unlike the previous story, the first meeting was clouded by troublesome information. According to the fertility doctor, the surrogate's weight might place the surrogacy pregnancy at risk. Therefore, the doctor recommended replacing the surrogate. The couple was outraged by this prospect. They felt that replacing a surrogate was an extreme measure, and they explained this by saying: "she is fat but not huge," which more than a medical evaluation seems to be an estimation of character and self-conduct.

This story highlights the important role of the commercial mediator. All the unpleasant discussions, about money, terms of contract, and indeed in this case the surrogate's need to lose weight, take place through the mediator, who assures the couple that the surrogate is committed to do "whatever it takes" in order to lose the necessary pounds and reach the desired weight level. This story also highlights another angle of surrogacy, one which is valid even under the most regulated medical markets: surrogacy is not just a contract of gestation and baby delivery for profit. It entails control over the female reproductive laborer's body to the most detailed level. Contracts can include dietary clauses, or restrictions on movement, recreation activity, sexual practices, and so on. Although the compensation model circulates around the production of a live, healthy genetic offspring to the commissioning parents, the commercial exchange closely monitors the surrogate's body, which becomes part of the exchange for the duration of the pregnancy—and in this case, also in the preparation period before attempting impregnation. This aspect of the contracts, while it does not reduce the surrogates' bodies into mere objects, definitely moves these bodies into the realm of commodities, to some extent removing them from the sole ownership of the person embodying them.

It eventually took nine months before a viable egg donor could be found for Yaron and Jonathan and the clinic was ready for the extraction process alongside fertilization and impregnation attempts. During this period, longer that the period originally stipulated in the surrogacy contract, the surrogate was expected to lose the necessary weight and maintain the dietary regime needed to keep her body ready for the embryo transfer. In the time that passed, Yaron and Jonathan also chose to move the fertilization attempts to another fertility clinic, since the first clinic they employed kept rejecting every potential egg donor they sent to be examined. The next step required therefore another examination of the surrogate, by the new fertility doctor, alongside the extraction of eggs

from their chosen egg donor and the in vitro fertilization of embryos that will be transferred into the surrogate's uterus. Yaron described what happened next:

> Fast forward nine months. So the doctor calls us from California to let us know that the ninth donor is ok. The next day, the surrogate is due to arrive and we will be done with it. So we raised a glass that night. We had finally found a donor. And then he called after the surrogate's medical examination, and told us: "She can't carry your pregnancy, she gained weight and is now morbidly obese [she had reached the highest level on the BMI scale]". That was a very difficult evening. A year and seven months into this process, ten months it took us to find her, and another nine months to find a donor. And then this examination that we were certain would be just a formality, because she had already gone through all the tests and everything that was needed back in Texas. But still, the doctor who is going to try and get her pregnant needs to examine her so [pause]. We really didn't think much of this examination, but then he calls us and tells us "this will not happen, I will not work with her." Even for insurance reasons. It exposes him too much to a highly risky pregnancy. So he was not willing to do it.

The surrogate's body, which was contracted but cannot be controlled, is the cause of the problem in this story. The body (and the surrogate) defied the contract which clearly demanded weight loss. In the nine months that had elapsed between the first medical examination and the second, her body shifted one weight category and reached the next and (according to the fertility clinic) most dangerous level, of "morbidly obesity" on the body mass index (BMI) scale.

To use Thomspon's (2005) articulation, the medical gaze through the clinic scales and the professional statistical measurement of a BMI scale transforms the surrogate's body (and, in a metonymic relationship, the surrogate herself) into a dangerous object, one that could harm the surrogate herself, the future child, and—through a potential malpractice lawsuit—could also harm the clinician's income and professional reputation.

This was a moment of rupture and great disappointment to both the commissioning parents and the surrogate, all invested in the surrogacy process through different means: bodily, affectively and financially. It was also a moment of rupture in the setting of the interview, which had been friendly and lighthearted up to that point. As a female researcher listening to two men describing the body of another woman, my empathy abruptly

changed, as I felt an immediate identification with the pain and shame that I imagined as being directed at the surrogate at this instant. My face obviously displayed my emotional reaction, because Yaron and Jonathan were quick to assure me that the medical reasons were valid and that the surrogate's own health could have been placed at risk with this pregnancy. They then went on to tell me about the surrogate's reaction:

> Both the doctor and the agency told us that she of course left the clinic in tears when he told her that he was unwilling to work with her, because she understood that she would hurt us considerably. But we took the hard choice and said—whatever it takes we will not carry on with her. We will not look for another clinic that will accept someone who weighs this much, not after two senior fertility clinicians said no to us.

The strong expression of emotions, the surrogate's tearful exit from the clinic, is framed in the context of the signed contract. As Yaron explained it to me, "she understood that she had hurt us considerably." Through the adjusted ontology of the relationship, the surrogate's own desires and hopes are removed from the commissioning father's narrative, as well as from their future family. The intimacy is organized through and for the purpose of having a child, and when this purpose cannot be achieved, the intimacy itself is disintegrated.

The surrogacy relationship, which began as a familial, intimate relationship, was easily modified into a commercial relationship, as between an employer and a subcontractor, or a consumer and a potential seller. No niceties were wasted in undoing the contract. In opposition to marriage dissolution or intimate partnership breakup, which requires administrative work in order to untie the relationship and often involve monetary or other compensation, here the severing of family-like ties was quick and uneven in its consequences. As with previous legal and monetary discussions, the undoing of the contract was performed by the surrogacy agency, which quickly turned to look for another, thinner, potential surrogate.

In common with Pande's findings, this case reiterates that framing surrogacy as an intimate gift exchange hinders a surrogate's ability to seek compensation for the lost time and effort. But at the same time, the legality of contract in and over the body allows for the introduction of limitations in the surrogacy contract, making her body permeable to and governed by the market.

Conclusion: Kinship, Affect and Commodity Relations

Feminist scholarship developed a critique of the development of markets in bodies and intimacies as a form of commodification—and therefore objectification—of female (or more broadly human) subjects. In this chapter, I have explored the outcomes of participation in gamete and gestation markets for the sellers (or reproductive laborers) and buyers in these markets. I have demonstrated that the meanings are tangible and dynamic, and depend greatly on the underlying legal and social infrastructure that encapsulate the monetary exchanges, as well as the material outcomes of the procedures deployed, which are dependent not just on the technologies involved but also on chance and the unknown, such as the unpredictable outcomes in the body itself.

Couples often describe surrogacy as an act of altruism: the child as a gift, the relationship between themselves and the surrogate as ongoing, reciprocal and benefitting all sides. This part of the commissioning parents' narratives might be true in some cases, but a continuity of these relations is dependent on the outcome of the market transaction, entailing the (re) production of a live, healthy baby. When rupture occurs, the framing of the relationship as a commercial commitment designed to produce a product is foregrounded, and alternative market services are sought, in order to realign the relationship, undo the initial contract and find a replacement. This is not to say that the intimacy that develops within surrogacy relations is not genuine, but it is strictly dependent on the positive results of the market exchange, and therefore does not ensure the persistence of a committed relationship which should operate despite a "market failure."

In discussing surrogacy as a form of commercial relations, I do not wish to create a clear divide between kinship relations and commercial relations. After all, marriage creates a financial unit and enforces financial commitments between its members no less than it symbolizes love and care. My argumentation throughout this chapter has been to show how surrogacy is based on a mixed commodity relationship, one developed both as a market commodity and as a form of kinship relations, and to explore the implications of this specific combination.

The fathers who took part in this research were involved in deliberations over the ethical stature of surrogacy. Some of these deliberations were private, even solitary, and some were designed for a more public audience: family members, colleagues, journalists and policy makers.

In these discussions, two main themes were interwoven: first, the articulation of the surrogacy contract as autonomous, benevolent and rooted in kinship, gift-like norms; in this articulation, surrogacy involved the developing of appropriate emotions toward other reproductive collaborators, and toward the surrogacy act. It is not only the reproductive laborers who conduct emotional labor. Commissioning parents, especially with surrogacy contracts in the USA, employed various techniques of creating intimacy and diffusing tensions throughout the surrogacy processes. They stressed the gift economy they employ, and the ongoing familial ties that are, or should be, formed in their mind as a result of surrogacy procedures.

In the second argument, which often overlapped with the previous, surrogacy was rationalized under neoliberal, laisser-faire ethics, as a form of commodity exchange between choosing subjects: both the seller and the receiver were described as autonomous, agentic and operating under certain restrictions, of their body, their sexuality, the market surrounding them and of the state policies that govern kinship opportunities and markets for reproduction.

Using Zelizer's (1989, 2005) analysis of the social dimensions of monetary transactions, I have shown that surrogacy is often depicted in terms of a gift. By doing this, the participants signify that they do not trespass social norms against the trade of human bodies or the trade of children, and generate a narrative that better suits kinship norms and relational desires. These intimate relations could be fantasized—when there was no direct contact between commissioning parents and surrogates—or could be based on mutual practices of creating intimacy and care relations, as was often the case with US surrogates. At the same time, surrogacy maintained its status as a market exchange, while surrogacy contracts included clauses that reiterated the intrinsic inequality between commissioning parents and surrogates, and therefore could be quickly dissolved when this aim of producing a child was no longer viable.

The research showed different formations of emotional labor, performed by both commissioning parents and surrogates. These affective practices, of maintaining good relations, showing affection and finding shared values, functioned to maintain the trouble-free execution of the economic transaction and did not interfere with employment logics or market needs when the contract required undoing, as was the case when surrogates to carry pregnancy or were discovered unable to do so. The literature (Pande 2010; Samama 2011) documents that emotional labor is carried out by surrogates to distance themselves from the children they

carry, yet also to create intimacy with commissioning parents. In this research, the emotional labor that is performed by commissioning parents comes to the fore, in their attempts to overcome embarrassment, find shared interests with surrogates from very different backgrounds and maintain intimate relations throughout the pregnancy period. These emerging emotions have come to serve an important part in the surrogacy industry, as a justificatory mechanism for the successful surrogacy stories. But at the same time, as we have seen, they can be directed elsewhere in cases of failure, in a manner that does support feminist objections of surrogacy as a form of alienation and estrangement.

In all the accounts described in this chapter, it seems that the parties who partake in surrogacy relations reject framing these relationships as a form of employment only. Both the financial remuneration and the child were repeatedly referred to as gifts, and indeed, similar to Pande's (2010b, 2011) and Waldby and Cooper's (2008) argumentation, the discursive elimination of labor relations threatens to leave reproductive laborers in a precarious position, devoid of protection by the state or the market.

Surrogacy is still a contested terrain for commercial action. In the past few years, we have witnessed the rise and fall of new surrogacy destinations, alongside the termination of other surrogacy destinations previously considered popular and lucrative, as state regulations evolve constantly in order to accommodate growing global concerns and local feminist debates.

As Klaus Hoeyer (2013) suggests, ethical controversies over "human body parts as commodities" demarcate greater social concerns. Setting the line between subjects and objects defines limits in relations of power which extend beyond the realm of market thinking and monetary worth. It is the importance of these relationships, and the dignity of subjects who partake in them, that has been the center of my analysis. Surrogacy relationships show how monetary exchanges can and do create prolonged commitments, when articulated as gift exchanges and when the exchange is performed under regulations that encourage intimacy and closeness. They also demonstrate, however, that market relations, especially the presence of mediators and state regulations that enforce market thinking, disqualify other forms of relatedness (such as motherhood through gestation), from creating fertile ground for the availability of estrangement as a commercial strategy for increasing profit by reducing care, and externalizing the risk into the surrogate's body.

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Notes

1. According to the Ministry of Interior, in 2012, 126 babies were born to Israeli citizens as a result of overseas surrogacy. In 2013, 167 babies were registered. Official estimations are that roughly half of these babies are born to gay fathers.
2. Israel's population is around eight million citizens, and while it is impossible to count the number of gay men in the country, the number of children through surrogacy in this population (over 200 until 2003) is well above international averages, and corresponds with higher usage of ARTs in Israel more broadly.

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